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FESTIVALS AND FOLKLORE OF GILGIT.

BY

GHULAM MUHAMMAD,
Chief Clerk in the Political Office, Gilgit.

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By GHULAM MUHAMMAD, Chief Clerk in the Political Office, Gilgit.

[Read July 5th, 1905.]

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INTRODUCTION.

In introducing the folklore and old customs of Gilgit, I may mention that great difficulty was experienced in collecting the material in a country which possesses no written record of any sort. I had to go from village to village and from house to house to gain information from anybody. After four years of incessant labour I collected some notes about the folklore, old customs, administration, tribes, games and past history of the country. The former two subjects, being of special interest, are now dealt with through the medium of this Society ; the others will be published later in book form.

The inhabitants always call their valley by the name of "Gilit," not Gilgit. The word Gilit is probably the corrupted form of a Sanskrit word "Girit," which means a mountainous place.

This secluded valley, which was half a century ago unknown, has now, owing to the recent disturbances in Hunza, Nagir, Chilas and Chitral, become so well known to the world that it requires here merely a brief description for readers to form an idea as to its position and character.

Gilgit is situated 228 miles (sixteen stages) to the north-west of Srinagar, at an elevation of about 4,400 feet above sea level. During summer the thermometer rises to 115° and during winter falls to 15°. It is surrounded on the north by the small States of Hunza and Nagir, on the west by Punial and Yasin, on the south by Chilas and Kashmir, and on the east by Skardu. The district extends along the Astor, Indus and Gilgit rivers

from the Burzil Pass to the Sharot village, a distance of 143 miles from south-east towards north-west with its small surrounding valleys of Kamri, Tarsing, Parising, Sai, Haramosh and Bagrot; and along the Hunza river from Gilgit to Guech, with its adjacent valley of Naltar, a distance of 24 miles.

The country was first conquered in 1846 by the troops of His Highness the Maharaja of Kashmir under Syed Nathe Shah from Gauhar Aman, the Khushwakti Chief of Yasin, who had usurped the district from Sikander Khan and his brother Karim Khan, the rightful rulers of Gilgit. Karim Khan had escaped to Kashmir to ask for help, and returned with a large force under Syed Nathe Shah. Hearing the news of their approach, Gauhar Aman fled to Yasin, leaving the country to be possessed by them without bloodshed. The country was restored to the rightful rulers, but some later events lead the Maharaja of Kashmir to keep the district under the direct jurisdiction of his own officials. The British Agency was established in 1889. The Political Agent, an officer of the Government of India, and the Wazir-i-Wazarat, an official of His Highness the Maharaja of Kashmir, have their headquarters at Gilgit proper. The latter has jurisdiction over the district only, while the former, in addition to his control over Gilgit, has political relations with the surrounding states of Hunza, Nagir, Punial, Ishkuman, Yasin, Ghizr and the Chilas republic, which all acknowledge the suzerainty of the Kashmir Durbar. Gilgit is garrisoned by Kashmir Imperial Service Troops under a General Officer Commanding appointed by His Highness the Maharaja of Kashmir. The troops are relieved every two years.

A good pony road runs between Srinagar, Gilgit, Chitral and Hunza, remaining open for traffic from June to October. It is closed from November to May, owing to the heavy fall of snow on the Tragbal (Rajdiagan) and the Burzil passes. However, the ordinary letter post is carried across the passes at favourable opportunities by local runners. Kashmir, Gilgit and Chitral are also connected by a telegraph line.

The present inhabitants of the country are all Muhammadans, chiefly of the Shia sect, with a few Sunnis and Maulais. The principal tribes are Ronos, Shins, Yeshkuns, Kashmiris, Kramins, Dums and Gujars. They are again divided into several families called after the names of distinguished ancestors. I am of the opinion that the Kramins are the original inhabitants of Gilgit, while the Yeshkuns, Shins and Ronos came afterwards in the above order and conquered the former inhabitants.

The Yeshkuns are probably an Aryan race, having arrived from Central Asia *via* the Hindu Kush. Being stronger than the aborigines, they succeeded in conquering these districts, made the original inhabitants their servants and named them "Kramins" (attendants).

The Shins profess to be the descendants of Arabs. They are probably Jews, and have come *via* Afghanistan from either Persia or Turkey. They prefer a style of self-government, and endeavour wherever they settle to continue this form of their original government. It is of interest to note, however, that before embracing Islam the Shins, in this resembling the Hindus, disliked meat, milk or even *ghi* made from cow's milk, disapproved of the keeping of fowls and regarded even a fish diet with aversion. If a Shin had taken two wives, one of his own tribe and the other of the Yeshkun tribe, the children

of the former would be Shins and those of the latter would be Yeshkuns. This shows that their family system takes the mother into consideration.

The Ronos are said to have come from Rajauri, a district in Kashmir, where they belonged to a ruling family of the district.

The Gujars have recently come to these parts and speak the same dialect as in India.

Besides these, there is another family of the former Muhammadan rulers of the country called "Rá." They originally came from Skardu about three centuries ago, and professed to be the descendants of Alexander the Great. The inhabitants considered them to have been born of a fairy, and this idea leads the people to think that their rulers were of a superior race touching on the divine, and that therefore it was necessary to honour and obey them.

The people live very simply, and their requirements are few. Each one is himself a cultivator, a weaver, a carpenter, etc. Their dress, which they weave from the wool of sheep and ibex, includes the *shuka* (cloak), woollen pantaloons, a woollen shirt and a rolled cap. The women wear loose trousers, a shirt and a cap, with a few silver ornaments and shell brooches. They wear on their feet a kind of leather socks called *pabboo*, made either of ibex skin or of cow hide. For hill journeys they wrap their feet in pieces of goat or ibex skin which they call *thauti*.

The chief amusement of the people is polo, which they play with the utmost zest, and shooting markhor, ibex and oorial with their matchlocks for the sake of meat, skin and wool.

The former language of the people was Sanskrit, but the dialect now spoken is generally called "Shina," though the Chitralis call it "Dangrik." It contains many Sanskrit as well as Persian words.

Such are the tribes to whom the folklore and customs appertain, but they have lived together for such a long period under the Buddhist and Muhammadan rulers that it is now difficult to know which of the ceremonies was originally observed by each separate tribe.

I.*

THE FESTIVAL OF "SHINO BAZONO."

The advent of spring in the Gilgit country brings with it the quaint festival of "Shino Bazono," which corresponds to the English May-day. It lasts about fifteen days, beginning in the middle of February and ending about the beginning of March. As indicating that the long cold winter is at an end with all its accompanying hardships, and that spring is nigh, bringing with it warmth and life and a renewal of the scanty stock of provisions which has run dangerously low during the past months, the festival is hailed with much rejoicing by the simple Gilgit folk. In order to observe this feast rightly, the people, twelve days before its commencement, put ten seers of wheat into a wooden basin. They fill this up with water and keep the mixture wet for five days, after which they take it out and place it in a small pit dug for the purpose in the ground, over which stones are heaped. The wheat is left in this pit for four days, after which the grain is seen

*[See also p. 119 *postea*.—Ed.]

to germinate. It is then taken out, dried and ground in one of the Gilgit water-mills. The flour so made is called *diram*, and of it a sweetmeat is compounded on the first of the month by adding some water, oil of apricots and walnuts to the flour and cooking the whole without the addition of any sugar. This sweetmeat has been tasted by the writer and is called *wailai diram*. It has a sweet flavour in spite of the absence of sugar, the fact being regarded as in a way miraculous. The remaining flour is utilized in making small flat loaves called *diram phiti*. This bread is eaten with raisins and oil. The combination is called *dracha bhat*. The feast is not, however, wholly of a vegetarian nature. In the month of "Nos" (about November) each family kills several sheep, and the meat is dried for future use. A leg and a tail are, however, set apart to be cooked on "Shino Bazono," and are then eaten with the *dracha bhat*.

The feast, which has been partaken of by all the members of the family together, being over, dancing commences and the following song is sung:—

- (1) Aju kal ootá la Drároo aju kal chirring ga ootá.
- (2) Goom áí chhani tharega, aju kal chirring ga ootá.
- (3) Ghi áí chhani tharega, aju kal chirring ga ootá.
- (4) Mos áí chhani tharega, aju kal chirring ga ootá.
- (5) Mon áí sarai tharega aju kal chirring ga ootá.
- (6) Ash to sho dez ik alo aju kal chirring ga ootá.

Translation:—

- (1) May this year come again, oh Brethren, may such a year come again!
- (2) We will have our stores filled with wheat, may such a year come again!
- (3) Much *ghi* will be produced, may the next year be such a one!
- (4) Quantities of meat will be stored, may the next year be such a one!
- (5) Our vessels will be filled with wine, may such a year appear again!
- (6) A blessed day has come to-day, may such a year appear again!

At noon all the fighting men assemble and make preparations for polo, while the women ascend to the roofs of the houses on each side of the road along which the procession to the polo-ground will pass. In their hands are long slender sticks, with which, as the procession passes, they belabour their heroes unmercifully. Koliwals are specially made the victims of this castigation. They are the trading community of the country, and the opportunity of paying off old scores is one not to be lost. An unpopular general dealer may consider himself fortunate if he escapes from the hands of these viragos with the payment of a forfeit of gold dust. Next comes the turn of the *Rá* or chief, who runs the gauntlet mounted. Galloping through, he salams with both hands to the women on either side, but even he is not allowed to pass without the bestowal of liberal largess on his fair subjects. It must be admitted that the ladies generally let him off lightly, for which no doubt they have their reasons. Possibly their position at court depends on it. On the arrival of the procession at the polo-ground, a goat is killed on one of the goal-stones. This sacrifice is called "Bazono-ai-Karai." The goat's head having been cut off, a rope is attached to it; the players then touch the head with their polo-sticks. After this a *doom* or drum-beater sets off at a run holding the end of the cord, to which the goat's head is attached behind. After him rides the *raja* or *trangfa* of the village, who strikes the head

repeatedly with his stick till they reach the opposite goal. This ends this part of the festival. Polo then begins, and, as is the fashion in these parts, is continued without intermission till the evening of the great day.

THE "AYI BOYI" CEREMONY.

Ayi Boyi is the name of a Gilgiti month falling next to "Shino Bozino." The day fixed for performing the ceremony was publicly announced by the Rá throughout the village. All the boys and young men of the village assembled in the afternoon at a place just below the Rá's dwelling. The Rá used to sit on the roof of the house surrounded by his private servants, and a heap of walnuts was laid before him, while his followers laid a heap of ashes near them. The Rá then threw all the walnuts among the people below, who scrambled for them. While they were thus employed a heavy shower of ashes was hurled down by the Rá's servants upon them. In the merriment which followed, the people would rush towards the Rá, endeavouring to seize him or his servants, if they were strong enough to do so; while if they proved to be the weaker, the chief's followers would turn the tables against them. Should the chief himself or any of his suit fall into their hands, he was only released on the payment of a suitable forfeit; but, should the struggle result in the favour of the chief and his party, the prisoners made from among the people were released after a few days' captivity.

II.

THE CEREMONY OF "GANONI."

The inhabitants of these parts are strictly prohibited from tasting any new crop before accomplishing the "Ganoni" ceremony, which is celebrated in the middle of June, when the wheat and barley are ripe. The Rajah or headman of the village fixes and proclaims throughout his district the days for the performance of this ceremony, which is carried out in the following manner. On the afternoon of the day fixed the people set out to their fields with loaves fried in butter, which are greedily eaten at a corner of the field by all the members of the family. After this they cut some ears of barley, bring them to their homes, and keep them for a while on a fire. These husked and roasted grains are now put in a small basin filled with milk or curds. Of this milk every member of the family takes three wooden spoons full. Then national dances and vainglorious songs continue till late in the night.

THE DUMA NIKHA CEREMONY.

When the people have finished the labour of reaping and winnowing their spring and autumn crops, and have put the grain into bags to carry to their homes, they recite the following prayer:—

- (1) Bismillah ya Khudaya Barakat deh.
- (2) Oosum, Doosum ai Barakat deh.
- (3) Kharki jawān ai Barakat deh.

- (4) Katawāl, Batawāl ai Barakat deh.
- (5) Gilit Malik ai Barakat deh.
- (6) Sharo ai Rat ai lo bu sing Barakat deh.
- (7) Owai ai sur ai Barakat deh.
- (8) Jakun ai shing nikheh sang Barakat deh.
- (9) Gogo ai dayin o sang Barakat deh.

Translation :—

- (1) In thy name, O merciful Lord, give us abundance !
- (2) Give us abundance like Oosum and Doosum (remarkable men of ancient times) !
- (3) Give us abundance like the brave Kharki (Kharki, the people say, was $4\frac{1}{2}$ yards tall) !
- (4) Give us abundance like Katawall and Batawall (also ancient heroes) !
- (5) Give us prosperity like Malik, the Raja of Gilgit !
- (6) Give us abundance, so that we may carry our grain home throughout the long night of autumn till it is dawn !
- (7) Give us abundance like the long day of summer !
- (8) Give us abundance till horns grow out of the ass !
- (9) Give us abundance till a beard grows from the rocks !

After gathering their crops the inhabitants celebrate a festival called "Duma Nikha," an expression of their feeling of freedom from all agricultural labour, and indulge in recreations and games, the chief of which is polo. A goat is killed and roasted and the meat eaten at the place where they perform their dances, which continue late into the night. They also add to their enjoyment by shooting at a mark, after which the assembly breaks up.

III.

MARRIAGE.

When a boy reaches 16 or 17 years of age, his parents begin to search for a wife for him, and as soon as they hear of a likely girl, they summon the headmen of their own village, to whom they give food, and request them to ask such and such a person to give his daughter in marriage. The headmen carry this message to the father of the girl, who entertains them for one or two days. During this time he summons his relatives and the headmen of his own village, in order to consult them in the matter. In the case of consent being given, a prayer is read by both the parties as sealing the promise. The boy's father now presents the following things to the girl's father in token of their new relationship :—

Cloth	...	5 yards.
Needle	...	1
Knife	...	1
Rope	...	1

A period is also fixed for celebrating the marriage, and the party returns. About a fortnight before the appointed time the father or guardian of the boy starts for the girl's village, with three tuloos of gold (1 tuloo = 8 mashas), which is given to her father, and fixes the number of individuals to join the procession, as well as the exact date of arrival. Returning home he makes all necessary arrangements and sends four seers of *ghi* called "tāo ai ghi" (*ghi* of the pan). The "Tāo" (pan) ceremony cannot be performed until this *ghi* reaches the party, so that should there be any delay in sending it, the side in fault pays one tuloo of gold as a fine for being late. The "Tāo" ceremony is performed before a number of the village people at 8. P.M., the night before marriage. A large iron pan is placed in the middle of the assembly, and a man of the Katchati or Babusi family rushes forth with some *ghi*, *atta*, and seeds of wild rue or leaves of *chili*; and, putting these things into the pan, burns a little fire under it till the contents begin to smoke. To fumigate all the air in the room he holds the pan by its brim and, lifting his hands above his head, commences to dance to the accompaniment of the band, while the people applaud and sing this song:—

- (1) Tung tao Bair Gul yao
Tung tao Jet Tanya na diayam
Tung tao aki Tananam.
- (2) Tung tao Gilit Malika
Tung tao Jet Tanya na diayam
Tung tao aki Tananam.
- (3) Tung tao Rajat ai yashki, etc.
- (4) Tung tao Romot ai yashki, etc.
- (5) Tung tao Kashir Shah Mira, etc.
- (6) Tung tao polo Maqpuna, etc.
- (7) Tung tao beero Moghlota, etc.
- (8) Tung tao uzir Khana Ra, etc.
- (9) Tung tao Suchyo Girkisa, etc.
- (10) Tung tao Maryo Machotya, etc.
- (11) Tung tao Neelo But ajih, etc.

Translation—

- (1) The pan belongs to Bair Gul.
I will never let anyone place this pan on the hearth,
I will place it there myself.
- (2) The pan belongs to Malik, the chief of Gilgit.
I will never let any other place this pan on the hearth,
I will place it there myself.
- (3) The pan is worthy of belonging to kings, etc.
- (4) The pan is worth being kept by a family, etc.
- (5) The pan belongs to Shah Mir, the chief of Kashmir, etc.
- (6) The pan belongs to Maqpun, the chief of Skardu, etc.
- (7) The pan belongs to Mughlot, the chief of Nagir, etc.

- (8) The pan belongs to Khana, the Raja of Yasin, etc.
- (9) The pan belongs to righteous Girkis (the ruler of Hunza).
- (10) The pan belongs to Maryo, the son of Machat (a celebrated person of the Rono family), etc.
- (11) The pan is placed on Neelo But, etc.

At the same time the women recite the following song :—

- (1) Thoki loozham Bair Gul yao
Thoki loozham Jet Minyoiki na diyam
Thoki loozham aki Meenam.
- (2) Thoki loozham Gilit Malika
Thoki loozham Jet Minyoiki na diyan
Thoki loozham aki Meenam.

(3—11) Etc. etc. etc.

Translation :—

- (1) A large coral grain belongs to Bair Gul.
I will never let another string this on a thread.
I will string it myself.
- (2) A large coral grain belongs to Malik, the chief of Gilgit.
I will never let another string this.
I will string it myself.
- (3—11) Continues on the lines of above song till its end.

The Katchata then places the pan on the hearth for a moment, and then, lifting it up again, commences to dance and sing in the above manner. Once more he repeats his performance (the one which closes this "Duban" ceremony), and then bringing out a maiden from the crowd, employs her to cook, without assistance, some small cakes on the pan. When four or five cakes are ready she hands over her task to other women, who readily take it up. Leaving the women to cook a dinner for them, the men go to another room, where they make merry by dancing and singing throughout the night, which is called after this ceremony "Tāo ai Rat" (the night of the pan). If the procession has to go to a village at some distance, the bridegroom is bathed at dawn. Then, wearing as neat and clean clothes as they can afford, the retinue starts with the following song, which is recited by the bridegroom :—

"Aroo rake ar ga stomai dodai ajeh at salam ik theam."

Translation :—

I will go into my home and salute my dearest mother, whose milk I have sucked.

Herewith he proceeds to his home to salute his mother, and, on his return, the party recites the following poem :—

- (1) Agooroo bai la agooroo but
- (2) Ash to sho dez ik alo agooroo bai la agooroo but
- (3) Nuh but sonai tulishi agooroo bai la agooroo but

Translation :—

- (1) Grow heavy, O stone, grow heavy!
- (2) A blessed day has come to-day.
Grow heavy, O stone, grow heavy!
- (3) This stone will be weighted with gold.
Grow heavy, O stone, grow heavy!

At evening, when the party approaches their destination, a merry shout makes known their arrival and is echoed from the opposite party. Both parties, on entering the bride's house, compete with each other in reciting songs boasting of the noble and heroic deeds of their ancestors and their chiefs; and then, having taken their food, they continue dancing till late in the night. The next morning a mullah, who always accompanies the procession with the bridegroom, reads the marriage service. The girl's father then brings the ornaments, clothes and utensils, etc., for his daughter. If he is a well-to-do man he presents the above things without charging their price to her husband. If this be done, his son-in-law cannot, through all his life, lay any claim to the property, which is always considered to be that of his wife, and she can marry anyone she pleases on her husband's death. But if the girl's father, being in straitened circumstances, cannot afford to give the things without recovering their cost, the boy's father has to pay their equivalent at the time, in cattle or clothes, etc., or whatever amount the arbitrators may decide, and in this case the bridegroom has full control over the property; on his death his wife cannot marry anyone without obtaining the consent of his relatives. This custom is called *kalak malak*.

When the ceremonies are over, the bridegroom's party makes its preparations to return. To entice the damsel out of her home the people recite the following song:—

- (1) Nikha mal ai bilili to ke khiaranini.
- (2) Nikha char ai barai to ke khiaranini.
- (3) Nikha sonelo jako to ke khiaranini.
- (4) Nikha garo achiai to ke khiaranini.
- (5) Nikha mukhailo doni to ke khiaranini.

Translation :—

- (1) Come out, O beloved of your mother, why are you delaying?
- (2) Come out, O water sprite, why are you delaying?
- (3) Come out, O possessor of golden locks, why are you delaying?
- (4) Come out, O mistress of charming eyes, why are you delaying?
- (5) Come out, O owner of pearly teeth, why are you delaying?

On this she is brought out. She weeps bitterly at the separation from her relatives, and the assembly sings the following song:—

- (1) Phonar ai molai ae nai ro Thhy rong bujai.
- (2) Hun khin ajeh bujai molai ae Thhy rong bujai.
- (3) Thy hiyo dija ae na'ro molai ae Thhy rong bujai.

Mem. A.S.B.

Translation :—

- (1) Do not weep, O flower-like girl, thy complexion will turn pale!
- (2) Thou wilt go on a lofty hill, O girl, thy complexion will turn pale.
- (3) Thou wilt (by weeping) burn your heart, thy complexion will turn pale.

In Shinaki there is a custom called "Kao." If a young man has determined to marry a certain girl but her parents are not willing to give her to him, the young man either calls out in an assembly of the village headmen:—"The girl is mine, and I will perform 'Kao' if she is not given to me." Sometimes in order to assemble the people he fires a gun outside the village and utters the same words in the presence of those who collect; or if he gets an opportunity he tears the girl's shirt slightly in the presence of some other men and says to her:—"You are mine." When this has been done, the parents are obliged to marry the girl to him, but they can demand from him whatever they like up to the limit of his means. If they marry the girl to anyone else, the young man will murder the girl as well as her husband as soon as he gets an opportunity.

IV.

THE CEREMONY OF "SEELO-AI-THALI" (SEAT OF CHASTITY).

This ceremony was performed for old women, who have been virtuous and chaste throughout their lives. These women were called "Seelo," and their descendants were very proud of them, so that on the occasion of family quarrels they used to say to the opposite party, "What have you to say to us? Our mother is "Seelo," while yours is not." To accomplish this rite, an elevated stone platform, about five yards each in length and breadth and a yard in height, was erected by the woman's nearest relatives. On the day appointed all her kinsmen came to the place, with a white she-goat as a sacred judge, to decide the fate of the old woman. The latter was clad in silk and placed on a bench. The eldest of the family bound a silk turban on his head, as well as on that of the goat; and, placing the goat below the bench with its face westward, addressed it in the following manner:—

"O thou white goat, if my daughter" (or whatever relative the woman was to the speaker) "has throughout her life lived an honest, virtuous and pious life and has remained clear of the sins and crimes of falsehood, theft, debauchery and treachery, be pleased to salute this bench for the sake of such a righteous and godly woman." In the case of the woman having led a blameless life, the goat by touching the bench approved her virtue. The assembled crowd then broke forth in cheers, and as an expression of their joy the relatives killed several goats and fed the people present. But if it happened otherwise, and the goat instead of performing what was considered an obeisance to the bench, ran round it bleating, then a great shame took hold of all the woman's kinsmen, and they ran away to their homes, never to speak to her again during the remainder of her life.

V.

THE CEREMONY OF NAGI SUCHEMI.

Nagi Suchemi is said to be a goddess who lived at Nangam in the Astore district, on a stone altar situated at the foot of the Nagishi hill. In former times cases of theft requiring settlement by oath were decided by the defendant's swearing on this sacred platform in the following manner. A man called Jungmi was specially appointed by the Rá to accompany the defendant to the place, receiving eight yards of cloth from the suspected person. A she-goat was killed on the altar and the meat cooked and eaten by all those present, in utensils which were always kept and are still kept there. The defendant had now to utter the following words loudly: "O Nagi Sochemi, inflict punishment upon me if I am guilty of the crime, but, if the plaintiff has laid a false claim upon me, be so kind as to inflict a calamity on him!" They then returned quietly to their homes in the darkness of night. None of the men who had attended this solemnity were allowed to appear in daylight before others of the village, and if by chance one of them showed himself to any villager, he had to repay whatever loss there arose from the theft, or from any untoward circumstance happening to the discoverer of the offending juryman at dawn of that day. For some days the case was left awaiting the decision of "Nagi Sochemi," and if in this period the suspected person suffered any kind of loss of property, of relatives, etc., he was adjudged guilty, and the total amount of loss by the theft was recovered from him and repaid to the plaintiff.

"KHURAN" OR "MAJARI."

In Chilas and in the adjacent valleys of Jalkot, Palas, Koli, Darel, Tangir, Gor, Harban, and Sazin, the disputes between two individuals or parties are settled by a peculiar ceremony called "Khuran" in Shinaki (Chilas, Darel, Tangir, Gor, Harban and Sazin), and "Majari" in Kohistan (Jalkot, Palas, and Koli). By this ceremony each of the opposite parties has to prove itself wealthier than the other, and whichever proves to be the poorer is forced to submit to the other. The ceremony is performed by each party giving food to all the villagers at a place called "Kai." Whichever party provides the larger feast gains the day, while the other must needs submit.

VI.

DANYALS.

There are some men and women of these parts who are called Danyals. When they are worked up into a state of frenzy the giants and fairies instruct them concerning the future of the country, the chiefs, etc. Whenever a chief is inquisitive on the subject of his future, he sends for the Danyals as well as the local musicians. A bundle of green chili leaves is then brought, and some of these, with a little *ghi*, are put into a small fire and burnt in an enclosure set apart for the purpose. As soon as the smoke rises, one or two Danyals push their way towards the fire and begin to inhale the smoke, until

they lose their senses and commence to dance to the noise of the drums. They also eat some of the extremely bitter leaves of the "chili" (*Juniperus macrocarpa*) while dancing. The music then becomes fast and furious, and the onlookers cheer loudly. The Danyals glance from time to time towards the surrounding trees, among which the giants and fairies have taken up a position. After a short dance the Danyals place their hands on the shoulders of the drum-beaters and their ears on the drums, as if they are very attentively listening to what the drums say. In a short time they again commence dancing, and sing the prophecies they have been told by the drums. If there be anybody present wearing red clothes when a Danyal is dancing, the Danyal is much annoyed and rushes at him. No man clad in red¹ clothes is therefore allowed to be present. After an hour's dance the performance closes, and one or two strong men appear in the circle, and the Danyals climb upon their backs and are carried away out of the enclosure to a house, on which after a short rest they recover from their frenzy.

I once asked a Danyal woman of Gilgit how she had become a Danyal, and after long hesitation she related to me the following story: "When about seven years of age I used to go with my flocks to the distant pastures on the hills. Once I saw a fairy sitting on a Chili tree and eating its leaves. Her eyes were brilliant and large, with thick eyebrows, which were high above the eyes and almost joining the hair of her head. She came towards me and asked me to accompany her, saying that her house was built of gold, and that I should be well feasted there. Hearing this I lost my senses, and as I was then standing on the edge of a stream, I fell down into it and got a severe wound on the right thigh. Some of the shepherd boys who were also feeding their flocks at some distance saw me fall, and, hastily taking me out of the water, carried me to the village. My father then killed a goat in order to ascertain if I were really under the power of the fairies, and I drank all of its blood, but I was unconscious of what was going on around and remained in this state for about ten days without taking any food. During this time the number of giants and fairies which appeared to me increased to fourteen, of whom seven were Muhammadans and seven Hindus, each sect remaining apart. Their queen, who was Hindu, was clad like a fakir and had gathered her hair on the top of her head, upon which she wore a cap. They brought and showed me different kinds of food, but gave me nothing to eat. In these days they taught me to dance, and the following two incantations called "Gano" and "Wiyo":—

Gano.

Ganam, Ganam, Trakhan ai Zooli ganam ; Zooli ai Hazooli ganam ; Yun ai ganooli ganam ; Pa ai paroni ganam ; Ding dolok ganam ; Tip philil ganam ; Jin janwar ganam ; Ashpo ai choro ganam ; Jakun ai goko ganam ; Ajeh ai oran ganam ; Ayi ai chhal ganam ; Turmuk ai shoolo ganam ; Bun ai shara ganam ; Neeli jut ganam ; Shiril ai shani ganam ; Dewak ai chhai ganam ; Chai chati joo ganam ; Musha birga ai joo ganam ; Dewak ai pun ganam ; Aga ai tare ganam ; Birdi ai bathai ganam ; Sat khap

¹ When I first saw a dance by a Danyal woman in 1893 at Gilgit, a man with a red umbrella came into the circle. This enraged the dancer, although she herself was wearing red chintz.

paryan ganam ; Hul ai sar ganam ; Sar ai nistai ganam ; Yujan ai batheli ganam ; Batheli ai Chhai ganam ; Sum ai sumading ganam ; Joo janwar ganam ; Soni sarplok ganam ; Sat khap barai ganam ; Drang ai dam ganam ; Khirte das ganam ; Hunte rong ganam ; Chin chili ganam ; Neeli nistai ganam ; Jun ai ayin ganam ; Taru ai shur ganam ; Trakhan ai Yudaini ganam ; Yudaini ai Hazooli ganam ; Gao ai bashoshi ganam.

Wiyo.

Muti, Muti, Trakhan ai Zooli muti ; Zooli ai Hazooli muti, &c. &c., continues in the same way up to end of Gano.

Translation—

Gano.

I will bind, I will bind, I will bind Zooli (a fairy) of Trakhan (a chief of Gilgit). I will bind Hazooli the daughter of Zooli. I will bind Ganooli the daughter of Yun (a fairy, also the moon). I will bind the sole of the foot. I will bind Ding (a giant) of the lower strata of the earth. I will bind all the insects. I will bind giants and wild animals. I will bind the colt of a mare. I will bind the offspring of an ass. I will bind the lamb of a sheep. I will bind the kid of a goat. I will bind the bullet of a gun. I will bind the markhors of the jungle. I will bind the green pastures. I will bind the fields of fairies. I will bind the key of demons. I will bind the pregnant women. I will bind men for fighting. I will bind the way of giants. I will bind the stars of the sky. I will bind the pieces of the earth. I will bind seven hundred fairies. I will bind the springs of ocean. I will bind the outlets of springs. I will bind Bathelo (a fort of fairies) on Yujan (Nanga Parbat or Dyamur Mountain, situated on the west of Astore). I will bind the key of Bathela. I will bind Sumading (a giant) of earth. I will bind all creation. I will bind Soni (a giant) of the upper strata of the earth. I will bind seven hundred daughters of fairies. I will bind the booming of drums. I will bind the lower plains. I will bind the upper pastures. I will bind all the *chili* trees. I will bind the green banners of the fairies. I will bind the mouth of serpents. I will bind the voice of the flute. I will bind Yudaini (the fairy drum which is said to be beaten by fairies on Khama, a mountain near Bulchi, a village in the Bagrot Valley) of Trakhan. I will bind Hazooli (a fairy) of Yudaini. I will bind the calf of the cow.

Wiyo.

I will release, I will release, I will release Zooli of Trakhan. I will release Hazooli, the daughter of Zooli.

&c.

&c.

&c.

If it is wished to restrain any person, phenomenon, thought, wish or desire, &c., from their natural course of action, the "Gano" is read by the Danyals on a small stone, which is then thrown towards the person or thing interested. By reciting the "Wiyo" in the same way on another stone, the person or thing is again rendered active.

YATHINI.

Adjacent to and on the southern side of Basin, a village about three miles west of Gilgit, there stands a cliff at the junction of the Kargah and Naupur nullahs. A large image of an erect Buddha has been sculptured on the rock-face, about 30 feet above the ground. It is without doubt a sculpture of ancient date and shows that the valley was once inhabited by a race professing Buddhism. The people call it "Yāthini" (giantess), and relate an interesting story about it. They say that she was the sister of Shri Badat, a King of Gilgit who was the descendant of giants. She lived on the said rock and, being a man-eater like her brother, was in the habit of killing and devouring half as many of the men as happened to pass by, leaving the other half unmolested. The princess continued this practice for a long period, to the great distress of the inhabitants, until a certain Danyal named Soglio, feeling the loss of so many people dear to his heart, devised a successful plan of murdering her in order to save his beloved countrymen. With the above design in his mind he set out for the place with a party of brave and bold men. Reaching the spot he burnt a small fire at the foot of the said rock, and his companions took their seat around it in a small circle. The Danyal, according to his usual custom, put some *chili* (juniper) leaves on the fire and inhaled its smoke. Thus driving himself into a state of ecstasy, he commenced dancing and singing some magic incantations, which were repeated by his companions. The Yāthini was elated at the prospect of more victims. As soon as she approached the Danyal he stepped forward and addressed her in a song, of which the following is a translation :—

"Have not you heard, O lovely princess, that your father has expired to-day?" Hearing this sad news, she struck her breast with her right hand. Soglio, who had with him some long iron nails, thrust one of them through her hand, as it lay on her breast, with such rapidity and strength that the nail penetrated her chest and went far into the rock behind. Soglio then sang another song, in which he sang as follows :—"Have not you heard, O charming princess, that your brother has also died to-day? On this she struck her second hand on her thigh. Soglio quickly pierced this with another sharp nail. The Yāthini was thus firmly fixed to the rock, and was unable to move, or to take revenge. The party was much delighted at this success of the Danyal, who further turned her into a stone by his prayer, and even more delighted were the inhabitants when they heard of the good news. The unfortunate Soglio requested the people to bury him on his death near the Yāthini, as otherwise she would return to life and continue her cruelties. The people, who had now obtained their desire, held a private council to discuss the matter. They argued that no one could tell when and where Soglio would die, and whether they would be alive or able to procure his body at the time, should he die in some far-away country or by drowning in the river; in which case the Yāthini would recommence her practices with renewed ferocity. After a long debate they thought it best to assassinate Soglio at once. A man was appointed to accomplish the horrible task, which he did, and Soglio was at the same time buried close to the figure on the rock.

VII.

OMENS.

Probably on account of the frequent attacks on Gilgit made by the chiefs of the surrounding States, certain signs and occurrences are considered to be omens among the Gilgitis. They are as follows :—

(1) If an unusually heavy rain falls at any season in Gilgit, it is supposed that the chief of Yasin will advance towards Gilgit.

(2) If innumerable kites are seen hovering over Gilgit, it is generally accepted that Gilgit is to be invaded by the Nagar people.

(3) If packs of wolves make frequent night visits into Gilgit, and inflict heavy losses among the flocks, it is affirmed that the chief of Hunza is certainly going to invade and plunder Gilgit.

(4) If the harvest be unusually abundant, it is believed that Gilgit will be attacked by the Punyal Chiefs.

VIII.

LUNAR ECLIPSE.

The Gilgitis say that Grahni is the name of a giant, who is a lover of the moon. On the 14th of the lunar months, when the moon is in its full beauty, the Grahni, whenever he pleases, catches hold of the moon, leaving untouched only a part which contains a fig tree. At such time the people of these parts beat their iron pans (on which they cook bread) like drums and cry loudly, "O Grahni, we have brought a large force, beating drums against thee, leave her (the moon), or we will rush upon thee?"

In the meantime the eclipse ends, and they become happy at their success.

SOLAR ECLIPSE.

The Gilgit people say that whenever any good king dies or is banished from his country, the giant Grahni becomes angry against the sun, and darkens a whole or a part of his (the sun's) face as a sign of grief for the death or the banishment of such a good king.

IX.

THE CREATION OF THE WORLD.

It is said that the earth was at first enveloped in water, which was at some places frozen, and where some Yaths (giants) had taken their abode under Yamlo Hal Singh, their ruler. On a certain day they held a council for the purpose of bringing earth over the water. Their ruler said that the task was above their power but, however, he knew of a wolf called Bojare Shal who lived at a place named Milgamok (old ice) and who, owing to his great genius, would be able to perform this work. "Provision¹," was first sent as a messenger by the Yaths, but the wolf refused to come, saying that he would not

¹ [In answer to a question regarding this name, the author of the paper informs me that the original word is *rogi*, which may also mean "fortune."—Ed.]

keep trust in Provision, who was a servant of everybody. On this the Yaths sent "Trust" to the wolf, and he came with him to the ruler of the Yaths. The object was explained to him and he said that a bird called Garai Patan, who lived on the snows on the Coxus Mountain, should be sent for at once. Provision was first made the messenger; but the bird declined to come; whereupon Trust was sent to him and he came to see Bojare Shal and Yamlo Hal Singh. Bojare Shal now sent for a mouse which lived close to his home. When everything was ready the wolf gave orders that Yamlo Hal Singh should stand in water as a pillar upon which Gorai Pattan should spread his wings, while the mouse by the making a hole into the ice should bring out and spread all the soil over the wings of Gorai Pattan. The orders were obeyed and the wings of the bird covered all the water, while the mouse brought out all the soil which was beneath the water. In this way the earth was turned over the water.

X.*

"NEELO BUT" (THE BLUE STONE).

There used to be at Gilgit a blue stone called "Neelo But," about a yard square, where the present telegraph office is situated. No king was acknowledged in the country unless he had resorted to it and prostrated himself before the stone. There and then the people adorned his head with a crown, swore fealty and tendered their allegiance. This was the day when all the better class would gather to see the new "Rá" perform all the ceremonies, and undergo all obligations considered necessary to the office of leader of the nation. This was done in order to secure their confidence by a man who was to become sole director over their destinies, among them being many who had taken an active part in bringing him to the throne and proclaiming him their chief.

When the ceremonies were over, all came one by one to kiss his hands, to receive his blessings and to bless him in return. They would then dance to the beating of drums, make merry, sing praises and recite poems describing the heroic deeds already performed by the Rá, his ancestors and others whose lives had become endeared to all by self-sacrifice in the cause of their country.

The *danyal* (soothsayer) was not left out on this occasion, for it was necessary to foretell the future of the king and his courtiers, and to exhibit the state of ecstasy that accompanies prophecy by the soothsayer. Before being dismissed at night all present partook of a feast; some were gratified with handsome *khilats* and other distinctions; some gratified by a gesture of kindness.

THE CEREMONY OF SHRI BAI.

Shri Bai is the name of a goddess who, as the people say, lived on a rock at Nangam, a village in the Astore district. The rock too is called Shri Bai, and is always kept covered with branches of juniper, while an attendant called "Boh Bin" resides there to look after it. Barren women used to sacrifice goats to and pray before the sacred stone in the hope of progeny. In the hot weather, when the people had gathered their

* [See also p. 103 *antea*.—Ed.]

crops, the female population of the village proceeded to the Devi in their best attire. They sang on their way, and when they reached their destination presented a goat to the "Boh Bin." He then threw up some small branches of the juniper in the air, and the women attempted to catch them before they fell to the ground. It was believed that a woman would be blessed with as many children as the branches she succeeded in catching. Descendants of the original "Boh Bin" still remain, but the ceremony is no longer observed.

A stone of this kind is also found at Barma near Gilgit. The ceremony performed upon this stone was exactly the same as stated above, but it has a different name, viz: "Mulkum."

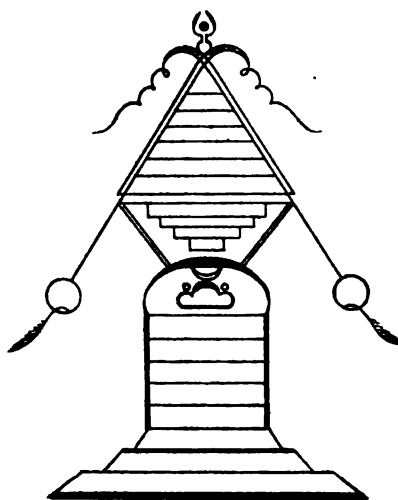
"RATO" OR "CHILI."

At Farfuh, a village in the Bagrot valley, there are five small portions of land situated at the foot of a mountain and called Chuto Rato, Shilo Rato, Surgon Rato, Chilko Rato and Thoko Rato. In these tracts there are five very large boulders and five small stones, called respectively "Dev-ai-Maron" and "Mos Samaran Ken" (*i.e.*, stone for distributing flesh). Here the "Rato" ceremony, also called "Chili," used to be performed as follows. During the first six days of the ceremony, which lasted for seven days, the people wore new and clean clothes, the sexes being separated and inhabiting different houses. On the seventh or the last day, all the people of the different communities or families of the village assembled separately and went to their respective "Ratos" with a goat and some young branches of the chili or *Juniperus macrocarpa*. These branches were placed upon the "Dev-ai-Maron," and the blood of the goat which was now sacrificed was thrown on. The meat was placed on the "Mos Samaran Ken" and distributed among those present, who roasted and ate it at the same place. It was never given to any woman or to a man of any family other than that of "Rato." The shoulder-blade of the goat killed was then placed on a high stone and fired at by marksmen amidst the noisy acclamations of the people, and a dance was held in honour of the sacred ceremony. After this the people assembled round the "Dev-ai-Maron," while the oldest man present or the headman of the village sat quite close to the stone and addressed it in the following manner: "O iron-like Rato, O Shri Bagartham, we have come to thee to express our wants. We have no progeny: kindly endow us with children. We are destitute of money: kindly favour us with gold and silver. We are in want of grain: please supply us." In the same manner he related all their desires for cattle, clothes, goods, etc., while the other men followed him and expressed their assent to what he said by crying "Amen." The women of the village now appeared in their best attire, with some dry flour and small flat loaves. They threw the *atta* on the *chili* branches and prayed in the same manner for the fulfilling of their desires. The loaves were distributed among the men, who eat and rejoiced. At some places the women were strictly prohibited from going near the Rato stone. This ceremony was performed and known by the same name throughout the whole of Gilgit, but on stones of different names, so that the stones at Datuchi and Bulchi were called "Aju Bin," at Sinakar "Shri Bin," at Gilgit and Dainyor "Rato-denaken," and at Naugam "Shri Bai." The

"Shri Bai" ceremony, performed with a slight difference at Naugam, will be dealt with separately.

SCULPTURED STONES.*

On the bank of the Indus river a big stone is seen about a mile's distance from the entrance of Botugah Nullah (Chilas Nullah) where there stand some boatmen's huts. It bears a figure of a Buddhist *Mane* [?]. The carving begins a little above the foot of the stone. In height it is a little larger than a man. Though faintly engraved, it is so skilfully whitened that, although it has been exposed for so long a time to the action



of the weather, its white colour is still to be remarked from a distance. On this rock there are also many other figures of the same kind, but they are somewhat smaller in size than the one above mentioned. Some two or three miles below this place, there are numerous stones of various sizes on the river bank bearing the figures of goats and markhorns, &c. Some of the stones show representations of axes, while the others are those of deer. At some places the carvings are seen on the top of a stone as well as on its sides. The same kind of figures are also seen in the Bagrot Valley engraved on rock-faces between the Sanikar and Bulchi villages.¹

At Barmas, near Damot, in the Sai valley, there are two pictures of Buddha. One is carved on a stone, and the other is a painting of Buddha sitting among his disciples.

At another place, in the neighbourhood of Chilas, there is a rock still larger in size, and on its river side there are a good many figures. There are also two or three carvings of temples with a large number of men, goats, horses and cows, &c., engraved on them. On this stone there is an inscription written in some ancient character. The same carvings are noticed for some way along the river, which here does not rise sufficiently in summer to do them any injury. It shows that in a certain period, this part of Chilas was inhabited by Buddhists. The inhabitants of Chilas are under the impression that all these inscriptions are made by the fairies.² The tradition is that in ancient times the land was

¹ These villages are situated in the Laspur Valley.

² [A similar belief is held by the Malays (Muhammadans) of Lower Siam and Pahang regarding the "Orang Parai" (Peris), and certain clay tablets of Buddhistic origin found in caves. See Steffen, *Man*, 1902, No. 125.—Ed.]

* [See also p. 106 *antea*.—Ed.]

frequently visited by fairies who used to make these inscriptions, as in the opinion of the Chilasis it is beyond man's power to produce such inscriptions. It is also affirmed that these fairies were seen in those days by all men, but nowadays they are visible to no one except to a great Mullah by dint of his miracles. The Bagrot people say that the carvings were inscribed on stones by the fairies on the night of "Shino Bazono;" and that on the same night the fairies frequently used to rub away the figures from one stone and to engrave the same on another.

THE CEREMONY OF SRI KUN.

Sri Kun is said to be the sister of Nagi Sochemi, and lived at Shankank, a village near Godai in the District of Astore. The villagers used to present goats to this goddess and prayed before her seat for the supply of their wants. Her followers were strictly prohibited from keeping cows, or drinking their milk, and were under the impression that by so doing they were apt to lose their flocks, herds, or the produce of their lands.

"JAINKISH" AND "DEWARO."

At Gilgit proper and in the surrounding villages there are seen two small tracts of land called "Jainkish" and "Dewaro." The former is situated on the river bank and the latter at the foot of a hill, except at some places in which they both are found at the foot of a hill. In ancient times, when Islam had not spread to these parts, the tribes used to burn the dead at "Jainkish," and a few days after they gathered and carried away the bones to "Dewaro," where they buried them in one pit. Remnants of bones still mark these places, though the traces have almost been obliterated by time. In these circumstances, however, one is not wrong in supposing that Muhammadanism is of recent growth.

Several old men still living at Gilgit relate that they used to play with the brass bangles and rings which they found in "Jainkish;" but to carry away such articles to their houses was considered improper. From this it appears that the dead bodies were burnt with their ornaments.

SANKAR VILLAGE AND A "CHINAR" TREE.

There is a small populous village named Sankar in the Bagrot Valley. It is said that when this tract was lying waste, a Fakir named Shah Burya passed through and halted there for a short time. Becoming thirsty and finding no water, he prayed to God for a good supply. His prayer was granted, and a sufficient quantity of water burst forth from an adjacent hill. After a few days Shah Burya felt the heat of the sun, and planting his stick, which was of *chinar* wood, deep into the ground, prayed again to the Almighty to make it into a large *chinar* tree. This prayer was also granted, and a big tree grew, under whose shadow he afterwards used to sit. The branches of this tree are said to have been once so large and spreading that they touched the neighbouring hill about 600 yards distant, across the Bagrot Nullah. The tree was afterwards burnt by the Mongols, but after a short period five shoots sprang out from its trunk, and these are still to be seen, forming an enclosure about 30 yards wide.

A PEARL TREE ON THE DEOBANI MOUNTAIN.

On the east of Tashot, a village in the Bagrot Valley, there stands a snow-covered mountain called Deobani. The people say that there is a large pearl tree on its top, which is the property of the fairies and giants. A good mountaineer is said to have once reached its summit. Gathering a load of the pearls, he started down towards his home. But he was surprised to see a crowd of giants and fairies coming after him, and, being frightened by their approach, he thought it better to throw away all the pearls in order to save his life; he was surprised, however, to find that a fairy still followed him as far as his house. There he closed his door. While changing his clothes he found that a pearl was hidden in his shoes. The pearl was then thrown towards the fairy; she picked it up and disappeared. A similar story is related about Nanga Parbat, a mountain on the west of Astor.

SHANGALI WEEN.

At about two miles east of Danyore, a village about three miles east of Gilgit, there is seen on the northern side of the road leading to the Bagrot Valley a small piece of ground about one yard square surrounded by walls about three feet high. This place is called "Shangali Ween" (place of putting chain). It is said that there used to be a golden chain hanging in the air without any support. In ancient times, when any case was to be decided on oath, both the parties were carried there and each of them addressed the chain in the following manner: "O *Sojio Shangali* (sacred chain), whoever of us is sinful please accuse him by striking his neck; and the chain used miraculously to whirl round the neck of the man who was guilty. The man was then convicted and punished by the authorities according to law. No chain is now found at the spot, and the people relate an interesting story about its disappearance. They say that two men of the Bagrot Valley were once coming together to Gilgit: one of them had brought some gold with him which the other succeeded in stealing. Making a small hole in his stick, he put the gold secretly into it. The men, after a long quarrel about the lost gold, decided that the case should be settled by the Shangali. When they were entering the place, the guilty man gave his stick which contained the gold to the other, and they both began to beg before the Shangali, asking that, whichever of them had gold in his possession, he might be struck by the Shangali. The Shangali, who was aware of the trick, was much enraged at this attempt to deceive, and, considering itself offended, at once disappeared for ever without settling their case. The loser of gold was now very angry, and in a fit of his anger struck the stick on the walls of the enclosure. The stick broke and the lost gold was disclosed.

NONG AND CHAKROT BARI.

Near Laos village in the Astor district there is a small fountain called Nong. The people consider it a sacred one and offer sacrifices at the place for the fulfilment of their wants. If owing to drought a loss of their crops is expected, or if for any other reason heavy rain is required, the people used to throw some unclean thing into the spring, such as the bone of a dog; it then began to rain, and continued until the object was taken out. Owing to the belief that the spring was sacred and, moreover, able

to inflict harm upon the people, they themselves did not dare to put an unclean thing into the spring; and therefore on such occasions a foreigner was employed to perform this act, receiving as remuneration a large quantity of grain collected for the purpose at the rate of two seers per house. After receiving this grain he threw some unclean thing into the spring; and took it out when the rain was no more required. There are two other similar springs: one in the Bagrot Valley, called Chakrot Bari; and the other near the Tarshing village in the Astor District, called Komachon uts.

“RASHOO AI YUDAINI.”

(The Fairies' Drum of Rashoo.)

The Doms of Bulchhi, a village in the Bagrot Valley, have still in their possession a small drum about one foot in diameter and three feet in circumference. This is called “Rashoo ai Yudaini.” It was once carefully kept in a handsome cover by Rashoo, a Rono Wazir of Gilgit, who had ruled for the chief in that place. It is said, that whenever Rashoo intended to advance against any chief, the Yudaini was brought and kept before him. If it made a noise, without having been beaten by anybody, Rashoo believed it an omen of success. But if it were silent, Rashoo postponed his expedition.

THE HOOF MARK OF A HORSE.

Between Edgah and Balan villages in the Astore district there are seen on a rock near the old road which faces the Phina village, a few small flags. It is said that at this place there is a mark on a stone of the hoof of a horse. The story of the hoof-print is this—The place was once haunted by a giantess, who was a bitter enemy of mankind, and had become the terror of the people. The people wished to get rid of her. By the providence of God, one day a venerable Darwesh—some say that the Darwesh was no one else but Hazrat Khizar himself—halted on the river-bank close to the foot of the Phina village, and saw the giantess across the stream. He flung himself on his horse and, spurring it vigorously, came upon the giantess with the speed of lightning. She had no alternative left but to take to her heels, which she did, leaving the noise of her shrieks behind, and was never seen again. The horse had come upon it with such a vigour that the stone gave way under its weight, and there burst forth from the stone a spring of cool, fresh water. Though there exists no trace of it now, it is still looked upon as a sacred place, and the people from far and near gather together annually to celebrate the event by killing a sheep, feasting upon it, and making merry.

XI.

THE FOOT OF MALIK THE RÁ OF GILGIT.¹

It is said that one of the feet of Malik, an ancient Rá of Gilgit, was naturally formed like the hoof of an ass. He took great care to conceal this defect from all people. One of his old servants had, however, a knowledge of the mystery; but he was strictly forbidden by the Rá to disclose the secret. The servant kept it from becoming known

¹ [Cf. the Greek story of Midas and his ears, and of how their asinine form was revealed to the people.—Ed.]

for a long time, in fear lest his life should be in danger should he breathe but a single word. But his belly began to swell day by day, owing to his keeping the knowledge to himself. He was at a loss to know how to cure his disease without betraying the secret, but at last thought of a remedy, and went up a lofty mountain to search out a lonely place where there would be no shepherds or other men. There he dug a small hole sufficiently large to hold his head. Seeing that nobody was anywhere near, he put his head into the hole and began to cry as loud as possible, in order to let out the secret from his belly, that one of the feet of Malik was like the hoof of an ass. He continued repeating the words till he felt quite cured, and then returned to Gilgit. A couple of *chili* trees are said to have grown up after a short time on the spot where he had uttered the words. A certain shepherd happened to go there and by chance cut a branch of one of the trees for the purpose of making a flute out of the wood. He brought it home and fashioned it into an instrument. But when the flute was blown it always uttered the sentence which the servant of the Rá had uttered on the mountain. The news soon got about, and the people were so surprised to hear it that numbers came from a far distance to satisfy their curiosity by seeing and hearing such a miraculous flute. The Rá himself even heard the news, to his perplexity and sorrow. He called for his servant to question him, and to punish him if there had been any fault on his part. But the man was unable to reply until he had traced the origin of the wood of which the flute was made. Having done this, he ascertained that the miraculous power of the flute was due to him. Begging pardon of the chief, he related to him the story, to the latter's great amusement, and thus saved his life.

XII.

THE LEGEND OF SHRI BADAT THE MAN-EATER.

Once upon a time there lived a chief at Gilgit named Shri Badat. He was in the habit of obtaining a sheep daily from his subjects. One day, when eating his dinner, he was much surprised to find that the meat was more tasty than before. He ordered his *kulchin* (darogha of the kitchen) to find out where the sheep was brought from. The *kotwal* concerned was sent for, and he stated that he had got this sheep from a woman of the Barmas village. She was ordered to appear at once. The woman who did not know the reason of this sudden call, was much frightened at being brought before the chief, whom she had never seen before. Trembling as she approached the court, she was much relieved on hearing Shri Badat's questions and cheerily replied as follows: "Peace be ever upon thee, O thou great King of Gilgit! The mother of this sheep had died a few days after its birth, and the lamb being very beautiful was very much admired by me. Thinking it a hardship to lose the lamb as well as the ewe, I fed it with my own milk until it was able to graze. A few days ago the same lamb was presented to your Highness." Shri Badat was very pleased on hearing this story, and gave the woman a liberal reward and dismissed her. Sitting alone, he began to think over the cause of the tastiness of the meat. He argued that when the meat of a lamb which had for a short time only sucked the human breast, was so excellent to the taste, the meat of the human being who is

always nourished by human milk would certainly be better than that of an animal. Coming to this conclusion, he gave orders that a tax of human children should be levied in future instead of sheep, and that their meat should always be served at his dinner. In this way he became a man-eater.

THE CAPTURE OF GILGIT BY SKARDU CHIEFS; THE SOUL OF SHRI BADAT AND THE
"TALINO" AND "NISALO" CEREMONIES.

In the reign of Shri Badat, a Buddhist Chief of Gilgit, three princes named Khisrau, Jamshed and Shamsher, the sons of Azur, a chief of Skardu, are said to have arrived at Danyore, a village situated about four miles east of Gilgit at the junction of the Gilgit and Hunza rivers. They were the first Muhammadan chiefs who started from Skardu to conquer and subdue the hill States of Hunza, Nagar and Gilgit. They had succeeded in capturing the two former States, and it was now the turn of Gilgit to fall into their hands. The people relate an interesting story about their arrival and their obtaining possession of the fertile tract of Gilgit proper. They say the princes were born of fairies and arrived at Danyore flying on wings from the lofty mountains where the fairies live. One day they saw a wild cow grazing on the "Danyore Khoh," a hill at about two miles distant from the place they were sitting. The elder brothers, Khisrau and Jamshed, requested the younger, Shamsher, to shoot the cow with his bow and arrow. Shamsher out of respect for his elder brothers said that he could not shoot first, but he was overruled and compelled to carry out the request. He then took up his bow and arrow and aiming at the cow shot her with such dexterity that her body was pierced by the arrow. The Danyore people were much surprised to see this skill of Shamsher, and ran away noisily to the hill to fetch the body. They found the animal lying half-dead of the wound caused by the arrow, which had penetrated the heart. The cow was brought to the village and placed before the princes, who ordered the liver to be roasted and served. When the meat was brought in, Khisrau and Jamshed remarked that it would be seemly on Shamsher's part to eat it himself, as it was the result of his skill. In vain did Shamsher try to make them join. He was thus obliged to eat it himself, but he had not taken more than three or four slices, when both his elder brothers took flight into the air and disappeared. Shamsher also tried his utmost to follow his brothers, but the meat just taken by him had worked such an effect on his body that he could not even rise a little above the surface of the earth, and reproaching himself with the deed which had caused his separation from his beloved but faithless brothers, he remained content to pass his future days in the village. The inhabitants of Danyore who had seen his marvellous act, considered him, on account of his being "fairy-born," of a race superior to their own, and always showed him much respect and obedience. After a lapse of some months he related to a large gathering of the villagers around him, that he had just seen a big markhor frolicking hither and thither on the Hapukor Mountain (above Naupur and Naikoo villages), and that he wished to shoot it at once with his arrow. They were very surprised to know that he had seen a markhor from a distance of more than four miles, and they would not have believed him had they not already experienced his miraculous power of sight on the occasion of his

shooting the cow, and had they not believed him to be fairy-born. They all therefore expressed their pleasure at his wish to shoot the markhor. Shamsheer then aimed at his victim, and, shooting the arrow with all his might, cried out that he had killed the markhor, to the great joy of the villagers, many of whom expressed their wish to accompany him in fetching the dead animal. They went up the hill *via* the Naupur stream and found the markhor lying on the self-same spot that had been pointed out by Shamsheer, and they all heartily congratulated him on his success. The sun was high and the day hot, and the men, who were tired, searched for and found a spring well shaded by trees. There they slept for a while. Miyo Khāi Soni, a daughter of Shri Badat, used also to live on the same mountain near the spring, in order to pass the hot summer days. A maid-servant of hers happened to come there to fetch water, and was surprised to find that some strangers were sleeping near the spring. She returned at once and reported the matter to her mistress, who became very angry and ordered all her maid-servants to capture and bring them before her. This was done. Shamsheer was a youth of handsome and comely appearance, and as soon as the princess saw him her rage fled, so that she forgot every angry word she had thought of as befitting the occasion, and very politely and amiably asked after his health and the cause of his coming up the mountain. She was so much struck and pleased with his refined behaviour and elegant manners that she at once exclaimed

“ I might call thee a thing divine : for nothing natural
I ever saw so noble.”

Shamsheer asked for her permission to leave and go down the hill, but this was refused and the party was amiably invited to stay the night. They devoted much of their time to conversation, and Miyo Khāi modestly showed her preference by listening to the stories of the prince's adventures and deeds of valour from his own lips. At last he gained a tender place in her heart. The moment was a critical one for Shamsheer, who thanked her courteously for her favourable consideration and told her that the idea of her giving her hand to a foreigner like himself would prove a sorrow to all concerned when the news reached Shri Badat. These words were hard to bear, and the soft-hearted princess began to weep and fell down at his feet. This action of Miyo Khāi produced a sudden effect on the heart of Shamsheer, who feeling for her unbearable grief, lifted her up from his feet and gently consented to their union, in spite of the fate that might await them at her father's hand. The princess was pleased beyond expression, and her subsequent devotion is a proof of her feelings. She ordered all her maid-servants to appear, and explained to them her desire. She also informed them how dear she was to Shri Badat and that this would cause him to listen to her appeal. But if any of them should tell the news, she must consider her life as at an end, and her property confiscated. They all trembled at the words of their mistress, and with due respect expressed themselves to the effect that her happiness was their heartfelt desire, and that they were extremely glad to know of this selection; and they promised that nobody else should hear a word about this engagement from their mouths. The marriage ceremonies were secretly performed on the same night, and Miyo Khāi was, some people say, named Sakina, but according to others her name became Nur Bukht. Next morning Shamsheer allowed his Danyori

companions to go down to their village, with instructions to keep what they had seen a secret. Shamsheer became filled with the desire to make himself ruler of Gilgit, and began to instigate his wife to murder her father and to raise the Danyori people secretly against him. Sakina, whose passions had mastered her sense of duty, prepared to take her father's life for the sake of her beloved stranger. Shri Badat, being the descendant of giants, had no fear of being attacked by sword or arrow, as these weapons had no effect on his body, and no one knew what his soul was made of. The first thing therefore for Shamsheer to inquire was the secret of his soul. So, on a certain day, in order to gratify this desire, and to prove the trust his wife had in him, he prophesied that as soon as the leaves of a certain tree should decay and become yellow, she should no more see her father. It happened that the leaves of the tree decayed much earlier than usual, and Sakina, thinking that it meant the death of her father, went down the hill lamenting; but she was much surprised to find that he was still alive. She related to her father that a few days ago a certain *fakir* had gone up the hill and had foretold that as soon as the leaves of a certain tree should turn yellow she should unfortunately find herself an orphan. On this day the leaves of the tree had turned yellow, and, considering this an ill-omen, her filial love had caused her to present herself at his feet, but she thanked God it was not so, and that the *fakir's* statement had proved false. Shri Badat said in reply, "O my affectionate daughter, nobody in the world can kill me, as no one knows of what my soul is made. How can it be injured until someone knows its nature? It is beyond a man's power to inflict harm on my body." Sakina said that her happiness depended on his life and safety. As she was dearest to him in the world, he should have no hesitation in informing her of the secret of his soul. She would, moreover, be able to forestall any unfavourable omens, and to show her filial love by devoting her life to the safety of her kind father. He used much *finesse* in turning the topic of conversation, and made many pretences in order to keep his secret from his daughter, in spite of her pertinacity. His paternal love at last compelled him to grant her wishes, and he informed her that his soul was made of *ghi* (butter), a substance which cannot be melted without much heat; and that whenever she should see a large fire burning in or around his fort, she must consider it the last day of his life. But he did not know that he was putting his life in danger by confiding in a weak-hearted woman, who was being used to take his life. Miyo Khāi passed a few days with her father and then went up to her hill-abode, where she found her beloved Shamsheer anxiously awaiting her arrival. To him she related her conversation with Shri Badat. He was extremely glad to receive this description of Shri Badat's soul, as he was prepared to spare no pains in taking his life. The information acquired now led him to think of the speedy fulfilment of his hopes. He is said to have sent for his Danyori companions secretly, who had accompanied him to the hill, and whose loyalty was unquestionable, since they believed him to be born of a fairy. The cruelty of Shri Badat knew no bounds, so that he had earned the title of man-eater; and his subjects were already looking for an opportunity of getting rid of the tyrant in order to save the lives of their innocent children. In a few words therefore Shamsheer won the Danyore men's approval of the plot against the life of Shri Badat, adding that he was now master of the secret of their ruler's

soul. They agreed to lend a helping hand to Shamsheer and to raise the subjects secretly against their merciless chief. On finding that the majority of the people had joined him, Shamsheer fixed a date for accomplishing the deed by burning a large fire late at night round the fort of Shri Badat. A few days before the appointed day, he sent down Sakina to her father with instructions to keep the secret, while he himself went down to Danyore village to make his preparations. At about 3 A.M. on the night appointed for the purpose, all the people turned out of their homes with torches in their hands and a quantity of wood. Shri Badat's fort was situated about 200 yards east of the present Gilgit polo-ground on the site of the houses of the Bāirai family. The people were still some way from the fort when Shri Badat's spirit began to feel uneasy. He therefore asked his daughter to go out and see what was the cause of his restlessness. This undutiful and faithless woman, who had a perfect knowledge of the conspiracy, went out and returned after some delay, in order to let the people come closer, and said that there was nothing to be feared outside the fort. But Shri Badat's increasing uneasiness brought him out of his room. He found himself in a very awkward position, having by this time been surrounded by the enemy, who had succeeded in planting large fires round the fort. In this predicament he had no time to consider the necessity of punishing his wicked daughter, but at once jumped up in the air and took wing towards Chotur Khan, a snowy tract in the Ishkoman Valley. He is said to have rested at Yashpur (a deserted village near about 12 miles west of Gilgit) Hinzil, where he requested somebody to bring him a cup of cold water. The village had a plentiful produce of grapes, and the inhabitants used to make wine from them. The man therefore brought out a cup of wine to Shri Badat, who refused, saying angrily that, seeing that he had come there after having escaped from a fire which had done great injury to his soul, it was improper for the man to give him wine instead of cold water, which was what he had asked for. But none would bring him water, and, being thus dissatisfied with the treatment of the villagers, he cursed the place, saying that it would be totally ruined and laid waste, so as to produce no grapes again. It happened in the following year that the glacier which afforded a supply of water for the village melted away, thus effectually destroying the village cultivation forever. From Yashpur Shri Badat went to Chotur Khan and hid himself there under a big glacier, where he is still said to have his abode. The people have a firm belief that he will re-appear at Gilgit to renew his rule over them with redoubled fury. Being afraid of his regaining the kingdom, the people are in the habit of burning big fires in their homes throughout the night of the anniversary in November on which Shri Badat was driven from Gilgit, in order to keep away his ghost if it return. On this night no one ventures to sleep, but to while away the time they are in the habit of dancing and singing round the big fires. This ceremony is called "Talino." There is, however, a family of Kulchins (the kitchen servants of Shri Badat) who do not take part in the performance of the ceremony; for they are still loyal and faithful to their master, and are still desirous of his returning to his own. This is the only family now residing at Gilgit who are well-wishers of Shri Badat. It is curious that they should have escaped injury at the hands of the opposite party.

On the afternoon of the following day each family kills five goats for every house, as a token of their happiness at being free for one more year from the re-arrival of the cruel chief. The meat is dried and kept to be cooked during the following months. It is said that the meat of the goats killed on this day does not turn bad, even if kept for years. This ceremony is called by them "Nisalo."

A STORY OF THE KATCHATA FAMILY AND "CHILI" CEREMONY.

Once upon a time there resided at Gilgit a wealthy family of Katchatas. This family lived alone in a separate fort on the site of the fruit orchard in which Mr. Hayward is buried. The family grew so strong that it kept the chief afraid of its power. The Rá, who always used to keep a watchful eye over this clan, was so frightened by their doings that, being unable to fight them openly in the day-time, he thought at last of making a sudden night attack on the sleeping warriors. The proposed attack was so successfully carried out by the Rá that he left none alive in the fort except a pregnant woman, who managed to escape by a small window and took flight up the Kargah Valley, in order to seek a refuge in a secluded village of Darel. There she soon bore a son. None of the family survived to cultivate their lands, which were lying waste. The Rá, however, took this task upon himself, and wheat was sown over the land by his followers. But he was much vexed when he saw the whole crop turned black and become unfit for food, and that his labour was fruitless. For the five successive years the same state of things continued, and the Rá, being weary of cultivating the lands any longer, at last ordered the Danyals to explain the real cause of this misfortune. According to their usual custom the Danyals worked themselves into a state of frenzy by burning the leaves of the *chili*, and then, putting their ears for a short time upon the drums to listen to what these had to say, sung a song to the following effect :—

"The fertility, prosperity and abundance of Gilgit were due to the happiness and the blessed hands of the Katchata clan, and because they were extremely oppressed and tyrannised over by the Rá, the destruction of the land resulted and will continue until a man of the same family is brought here to plough the lands with his own oxen, and to put in the seed in the Rá's cloak. A few handfuls must be scattered by the Rá himself, while the remainder is sown by the Katchata or his followers in these fields. The other inhabitants must not precede the Katchata in ploughing and cultivating their lands." On this the chief gave orders to the assembly to bring a man of that clan, from any part of the country in which he could be found, and promised that a good reward would be given to the man who succeeded in finding him. A number of the Rá's followers at once started in all directions in the hope of gaining the reward. The man who had set out for Darel and Tangir came to know, to his great delight, that a woman of the family had at the time of the massacre escaped towards Darel, where she had since borne a son. He sought out her dwelling, and promising her safety as well as a good reward, obtained her consent to accompany him to Gilgit. He thus gained the reward, while she was welcomed by all the people. The Rá then assisted in the sowing of the fields according to the advice of the Danyals, and with the returning happiness of

the Katchata the crops were that year excellent. The boy was afterwards married and is said to have had four sons. Three of them were sent to the Rás of Hunza, Nagar and Yasin, at their request, to reside in their respective States as beings of divine nature, while one remained at Gilgit. From that time it has become a custom that the Rá's lands are ploughed first by the Katchata clan, and that afterwards the other people commence this operation. As soon as the ploughing is finished and the time to sow the seed has arrived, the Rá gives a big feast to the inhabitants, who all assemble at his house and make merry, with the usual dancing, singing and playing upon flutes and drums. Some flour is then rubbed on a Katchata's face, and his long locks are let loose. Moreover, he is made to bellow and go like an ox in front of all the party towards the Rá's fields, where some food is given him by the Rá. This he catches and eats like a beast. Next begins the sowing operation by the Katchata's putting some handfuls of seed in the Rá's skirt, who mixing with it a small amount of gold dust, scatters it with his own hands in one of the fields. The rest of the seed is scattered by the Katchata, and then by all the other people in their fields. On this day, which is called "Chili," the Katchata receives from the Rá a reward of one maund of flour, 5 seers of *ghi*, one turban and one cloak.

THE MURDER OF WAZIR THUSHO.

There lived a wealthy and influential man named Thusho at Gulapur in the Punyal District, during the time of Badshah, who was the ruler of Yasin. He had made for himself a golden plough, and used to keep many hidden treasures in safe places in the adjacent *nullahs*. These are said to be still buried, but the places are unknown. Badshah, the Mehtar of Yasin, once sent him a *khillat*. When the messengers reached Gulapur, Thusho was ploughing in a field on the side of the Yasin road. The men, who did not know Thusho asked him the whereabouts of the house of Wazir Thusho. He pointed out his own house to them, showing them a round-about way to it, while he himself went there direct by a short cut and arrived before them. In the interval he changed his clothes and then met the messengers, who presented him with the *khillat*. On receiving this, Thusho *salaamed* towards his fort called "Boori Thoki." (Its ruins are still found at Gulapur.) By so doing he meant that his fort was so strong that the Mehtars of Yasin sent him presents. The messengers were soon dismissed by him, and they related this story to their chief on their return to Yasin. The chief was much angered by Thusho's bearing, and advanced against him with a large force. Thusho sent out his younger brother, Khushhal Beg, to check his advance, but he had already reached Gulapur. In the fighting which ensued, Khushhal Beg cut his way through the opposite forces and came face to face with Badshah, who made three cuts with a sword at Khushhal Beg, which the latter dexterously parried with his shield, and cried out that it was now his turn of attack. The Mehtar enquired as to which of them was after all to turn tail, to which Khushhal Beg made reply that Badshah was a king of hawks, Khushhal Beg of fowls only, and that he must at last give away. The fighting was then stopped, and the Mehtar being considered victorious, returned to Yasin. Thusho was very angry that his brother Khushhal Beg had not killed Badshah when such a favourable opportunity offered itself; so he made him a prisoner in the fort of Chatur Khan in Ishkoman. Hearing this news, Badshah again led his forces against

Thusho. The Mehtar captured Hakim Beg, the son of Thusho, at Gakuch and brought him along with great ceremony and treated him very kindly, making him many presents in order to show him his magnanimity. Reaching Gulapur, the Mehtar sent Hakim Beg to his father Thushoo with a message of surrender; but Thusho was still more enraged at such a message from the lips of his own son, whom he blamed for bringing with him an army against his father; and (taking up a matchlock) was ready to commence fighting. Hakim Beg who had seen Badshah's might, however, persuaded him from doing so, and forced him to accept allegiance. Thusho yielded to this, and in the midst of a large crowd of the headmen and his followers, came out of his fort to *salaam* to Badshah. A dance was then held by the Mehtar, and Thusho ordered to show his obedience by dancing. This he did, but instead of *salaaming* to Badshah in the course of the dance, he bowed towards his own fort. The Mehtar was filled with anger and ordered his servants to behead Thusho with his 12 sons at the same spot. They were cruelly murdered and buried all together. Their grave, which is called "Thusho ai Bombat," is about five yards square and nine feet high, having the form of a small vault in which they are buried. The roof has now fallen in owing to a fig-tree having grown out of the vault. Khushal Beg, the brother of Thusho, was afterwards recalled by Badshah from Chatur Khan and made Wazir of Gulapur.

THE ADVANCE OF SKARDU CHIEFS AGAINST CHITRAL AND THE DEVASTATION OF THE CHEMOGAH VILLAGE.

When Sher Shah, Ali Shah, Shah Murad, and Shah Sultan, the princes of Skardu, advanced towards Chitral, they halted on their way for a couple of days at Chemogah, a village about 19 miles east of Gilgit. Here they made merry, played polo, and tried to overawe the people by the horrible noise of about a score of drums. All the inhabitants of the village came to pay their respects, except one wealthy man of Chemogah. Some of his enemies called his absence to notice. He was therefore brought by the Chiefs' men and asked to explain the cause of his delay in paying his respects. He stated that he had gone to his goat-pen, and as he had left the kids and lambs loose to suck milk, he could not, owing to their noise, hear of the arrival of the princes or the sound of their drums. The chiefs turned very angry, and to ascertain the truth of his statement, they deputed some of their servants to go into the man's pen and to listen for the sound of the drums, which would be beaten afterwards. They returned, saying that the noise of his flocks was sufficiently overpowering to overcome the sound of the drums. The chiefs were astonished to hear this; but still they did not relent, and they decided that the lands of Chemogah should be laid waste in order to prevent any of the people becoming rich enough to admit of a similar display of arrogance and disrespect. For this purpose the chiefs gave orders that twelve bags of quicksilver should be thrown into the source of the Chemogah stream, in order that the quick silver, because of its weight, would cause the level of the stream to be depressed and prevent water from being obtained for the irrigation of the land; and so it came about that Chemogah village and fields were laid waste.

Their army is said to have arrived at Gilgit by both the Haramosh and the Astore routes. When both the divisions joined at Hinzil, a village about seven miles north-west of Gilgit, the

princes thought of counting their men for the purpose of ascertaining their losses, as they were proceeding against a distant and formidable foe, who was likely to inflict a further loss on their numbers. Such a large force was never seen before in the country, and it was not an easy task for the chiefs to have them counted in a day. The simplest way therefore was adopted by the chiefs, *viz.*, to order their men to throw stones together in a heap at one stone per man, and to take out one stone from the same heap on their return, in order that by this means they might be able to deduct the casualties. There is a heap of stones at Hinzil, which, however, is more probably the ruins of a Bhuddist tope.

They conquered the country as far as Chitral, where they are said to have placed a big stone under a large *chinar* tree.

The *dák* arrangements are said to be so excellent that the chiefs used to eat dinner cooked at Skardu, which reached them warm at a distance of about 400 miles.

The following song is still preserved at Gilgit in memory of these Chiefs :—

- “(1) Ala, Sher Shah, Ali Shah, Murad trai draro, Khiri nile sine aje Kaltor ganaige.
- (2) Ala pote, Makpoon ai pote, trai draro Khiri nile sine aje Kaltor ganaige.
- (3) Ala, Sher Shah, Ali Shah, Murad, trai draro, Khiri hole sarega lam guti ganaige.
- (4) Ala, pote Makpoon ai pote, trai draro Khiri hole sarega lam guti ganaige.
- (5) Ala, Sher Shah, Ali Shah, Murad, trai draro, Hathoo Khān Khur bai Khiri Hosi ga Yur phiraigai.
- (6) Ala, pote, Makpoon ai pote, trai draro, Hathoo Khān Khur bai Khiri Hosi ga Yur phiraigai.
- (7) Ala, Sher Shah, Ali Shah, Murad, trai draro, Chemogar ai cel phote, sang brang tharaigai.
- (8) Ala, pote, Makpoon ai pote, trai draro, Chemogar ai cel phote, sang brang tharaigai.
- (9) Ala, Sher Shah, Ali Shah, Murad, trai draro, hune nili Chili ai Khiri devai notaige.
- (10) Ala, pote, Makpoon ai pote trai draro, hune nili Chili ai Khiri devai notaige.
- (11) Ala, Sher Shah, Ali Shah, Murad, trai draro, hune nile Chili ai Khiri dum dolo bashaigai.
- (12) Ala, poti, Makpoon ai pote trai draro, hune nili Chili ai Khiri dum dolo bashaigai.
- (13) Ala, Sher Shah, Ali Shah, Murad, trai draro, Khiri Brook ga Balim photai, Khiri roni ronal tharaigai.
- (14) Ala, pote Makpoon ai pote trai draro, Khiri Brook ga Balim photai, Khiri roni ronal tharaigai.
- (15) Ala, Sher Shah, Ali Shah, Murad, trai draro, Khiri Brook ga Balim photai Khiri chai ghinigai.
- (16) Ala, pote, Makpoon ai pote, trai draro, Khiri Brook ga Balim photai Khiri chai ghinigai.

- (17) Ala, Sher Shah, Ali Shah, Murad, trai draro, Chtrachtral aje *bat bai*, Khiri oordome thap tharaigai.
- (18) Ala, pote, Makpoon ai pote, trai draro, chtrachtral aje *bat bai*, Khiri oordome thap tharaigai.
- (19) Ala, Sher Shah, Ali Shah, Murad, trai draro, Shah Katur nayáta, mute chhal bagaigai.
- (20) Ala, pote, Makpoon ai pote, trai draro, Shah Katur nayata, mute chhal bagaigai.
- (21) Ala, Sher Shah, Ali Shah, Murad, trai draro, Gilit brangsa ganen, Yasin ar bola degai.
- (22) Ala, pote, Makpoon ai pote, trai draro, Gilit brangsa ganen, Yasin ar bola degai.
- (23) Ala, Sher Shah, Ali Shah, Murad, trai draro, chimar ai chhai photai, dare bat othaigai.
- (24) Ala, pote, Makpoon ai pote, trai draro, chimar ai chhai photai, dare bat othaigai."

TRANSLATION.

- (1) O (countrymen), Sher Shah, Ali Shah, and Murad, three brothers, have made a bridge over the blue river below.
- (2) O (countrymen), the sons, the sons of Makpoon, three brothers, have made a bridge over the blue river below.
- (3) O (countrymen), Sher Shah, Ali Shah, and Murad, three brothers, have pitched their shining tents beside the rippling pond below.
- (4) O (countrymen), the sons, the sons of Makpoon, three brothers, have pitched their shining tents beside the rippling pond below.
- (5) O (countrymen), Sher Shah, Ali Shah, and Murad, three brothers, have made a *kul* (watercourse) below Hathu mountain (between Ramghat and Doyan) and have worked a water-mill with it at Hosi (a place near Ramghat).
- (6) O (countrymen), the sons, the sons of Makpoon three brothers, have made a *kul* below Hathu mountain (between Ramghat and Doyan) and have worked a water-mill with it at Hosi (a place near Ramghat).
- (7) O (countrymen), Sher Shah, Ali Shah, and Murad, three brothers, have broken the *nullah* of Chemogar (Chemogah) and have made the land barren.
- (8) O (countrymen), the sons, the sons of Makpoon, three brothers, have broken the *nullah* of Chemogar (Chemogah) and have made the land barren.
- (9) O (countrymen), Sher Shah, Ali Shah, and Murad, three brothers, have held a dance of giants beneath that high, green *chili* tree.
- (10) O (countrymen), the sons, the sons of Makpoon, three brothers, have held a dance of giants beneath that high green *chili* tree.
- (11) O (countrymen), Sher Shah, Ali Shah, and Murad, three brothers, are having their drums beaten beneath that high, green *chili* tree.

- (12) O (countrymen), the sons, the sons of Makpoon, three brothers, are haying their drums beaten beneath that high, green *chili* tree.
- (13) O (countrymen), Sher Shah, Ail Shah, and Murad, three brothers, have conquered Brook and Balim, and the women of the places are weeping.
- (14) O (countrymen), the sons, the sons of Makpoon, three brothers, have conquered Brook and Balim, and the women of the places are weeping.
- (15) O (countrymen), Sher Shah, Ali Shah, and Murad, three brothers, have seized Brook and Balim and have brought here a number of the girls of these places.
- (16) O (countrymen), the sons, the sons of Makpoon, three brothers, have seized Brook and Balim and have brought here a number of the girls of those places.
- (17) O (countrymen), Sher Shah, Ali Shah, and Murad, three brothers, have placed a stone in Chitral and have upset the land.
- (18) O (countrymen), the sons, the sons of Makpoon, three brothers, have placed a stone in Chitral and have upset the land.
- (19) O (countrymen), Sher Shah, Ali Shah, and Murad, three brothers, have defamed the name of Shah Katur (ruler of Chitral) and have distributed many goats.
- (20) O (countrymen), the sons, the sons of Makpoon, three brothers, have defamed the name of Shah Katur (ruler of Chitral) and have distributed many goats.
- (21) O (countrymen), Sher Shah, Ali Shah, and Murad, three brothers, have halted at Gilgit, and played polo at Yasin.
- (22) O (countrymen), the sons, the sons of Makpoon, three brothers, have halted at Gilgit, and played polo at Yasin.
- (23) O (countrymen), Sher Shah, Ali Shah, and Murad, three brothers, have broken the iron lock and left the doors open.
- (24) O (countrymen), the sons, the sons of Makpoon, three brothers, have broken the iron lock and left the doors opened.

TRAKHAN'S BEING THROWN INTO THE RIVER.

Tra-Trakhan, an ancient Rá of Gilgit, is said to have married a woman of a wealthy family of Darel. The Rá was very fond of playing polo and used to go to Darel weekly for the purpose of playing his favourite game with the seven brothers of his wife. One game was played on the condition that whichever party lost the game should be murdered. After a long and skilful game the Rá was winner, and according to the conditions of the agreement he executed all his brothers-in-law. The Soni (queen), who was much disturbed on hearing the sad news of her brothers' death, determined to revenge them and mixed arsenic in her husband's food. So he died, and she took the reins of government into her own hands. After a lapse of a month she gave birth to a son who was named Trakhan; but, his mother, who was deeply grieved on account of her brothers' fate, did not like to see the son of a murderer, and cruelly locked him up in a wooden box, which she secretly threw into the river. The box is said to have been carried away by the current as far as Hodar, a village in the Chilas District, where it was seen by two brothers of poor means, who were collecting wood on the river bank. Noticing that

the box was floating quite close to the bank, and thinking that it might contain some treasure, one of them jumped into the river and brought it ashore. Thinking it better to open the box in their house, they concealed it in a bundle of wood and carried it home. There they opened it; but to their and their mother's great surprise, a lovely infant was found in it still alive. Their mother brought up this outcast child with every care. The family was in straitened circumstances, but after the arrival of the child they grew richer and richer, and they considered his arrival the cause of their prosperity. When the infant was six years of age he began to talk freely with his foster mother, who now related to him the story of his appearance among them, and their becoming more prosperous since his arrival. When Trakhan reached his twelfth year he wished to see the Gilgit district, of which he had heard a great deal, specially in respect of its fertility. So he set out for the place accompanied by his foster brothers. He stayed for a few days on Harali, a hill to the north of Gilgit which has a flat stretch of land called "Baldas" on its top. This was cultivated in those days, as the water-supply (which has now dried up) was sufficient, and there existed a small village on the spot.

The mother of Trakhan was still the ruler of Gilgit, but had then fallen dangerously ill. The people were therefore in search of another competent Rá from any of the neighbouring districts, as there was no one left of the ruling family of Gilgit. One early morning when the village cocks began to crow, the birds, instead of the usual noise of *Kukroonkoon*, uttered the following words, to the great astonishment and delight of the people, "*Beldas tham bayi*" (there is a king at Baldas). Men were at once sent thence to bring down any stranger they happened to find. The three brothers were seen by them and captured and forcibly carried before the queen. Trakhan was handsome and stately in appearance, and the queen therefore addressed him, and asked him to relate the reason of his undertaking this journey, and inquired of his country and his birth. He related all his history at full length, and she found, to her extreme surprise and joy, that the boy then speaking was her own son, whom she had so mercilessly thrown into the river, when her mind was disturbed by the murder of her brothers. She then embraced Trakhan and proclaimed him the rightful ruler and heir to the chiefship of Gilgit.

TRAKHAN AND A CROW.

On a certain day, it is said, Trakhan, the strongest and the proudest Rá of Gilgit, was sitting on the banks of a water-channel in the midst of an assembly of his followers. There he told them that there was no one in the world equal to him in bravery and strength. While he was thus boasting, a crow happened to pass over his head and soiled him. He turned very angry at the impudent action of the crow, and ordered his followers to catch it at once by any means possible. The bird having been pursued by so many men, flew away towards the village of Manawar, and from thence towards Danyore across the Gilgit river; but seeing that the gathering did not quit its pursuit, it escaped towards the Danyore Nullah. There a woman was washing the flesh of a markhor. The pursuers took from her a piece or two of the flesh, and by the help of this meat they succeeded in seizing the poor bird. It was brought before their Rá, who indignantly asked the bird to explain the cause of its conduct towards a king of Gilgit.

The crow, it is said, replied saying, "The boast made by you on a spot I know well to be the grave of a man far more powerful than you, did not please me. A ring of the same warrior is also buried at this spot, and it will show you how strong he was in comparison with you." Trakhan gave orders to dig up the ground; these were at once obeyed, and a finger ring was found in the grave so wide that Trakhan could pass it over his body. A delicate feast of meat was then prepared for the crow, and afterwards the bird was set free.

SU MALIK'S BRAVERY AND A "TALLUFAR."¹

Su Malik, an ancient Rá of Gilgit, is said to have presented a dog as a dowry to his sister, who was married to Farmaish, a ruler of Yasin. When Taj Mughal, the chief of Badakhshan, arrived at Darkot for the purpose of attacking Gilgit, the Rá of which place had refused allegiance to Badakhshan and stopped sending the tribute of Chogas, Farmaish wrote a letter to Su Malik, and enclosing it in the collar of the dog, ordered it to start at once for Gilgit. The dog arrived here within five hours, travelling by night. Su Malik got the letter and started on the same day with a strong force to check the enemy's advance, and to assist Farmaish against the Mongols invading Yasin. Both the forces reached Yasin on the same day and encamped on the opposite sides of the river bank. The Mongols, who had come by short and slow marches, sent a message to Su Malik to commence the fighting; but the Gilgit men were too weary to fight owing to their previous haste, and so Su Malik sent a reply requesting them to postpone the combat until the next day. However, he asked the Mongols that if there were any strong athletic men in their army, they should show him their skill. Taj Mughal ordered one of his champions to show his prowess to Su Malik. The man caught hold of a large goat and threw her across the river, with such strength that the goat fell in the Sarginis (Gilgitis) camp near Su Malik. On this Su Malik, who was very strong, and had reached his full muscular development, took up a large and heavy log of wood and threw it in turn towards the Mongols with such force that, though the log was much heavier than the goat, it fell into the Mongol camp across the river. Seeing this prowess on the part of Su Malik, the Mongols lost their courage, and giving up the idea of any further fighting, they retreated on the same night. By dawn Su Malik, seeing no enemies in their camp, pursued them rapidly and caught them at Darkot, where Su Malik, having tumbled from his pony, fell into his enemies' hands and was carried by them as a prisoner to Badakhshan, without its being known to them that he was the Rá of Gilgit. There he was given the work of bringing wood for the Mir's kitchen. On a certain day when he was collecting wood he saw the head of a dead animal and began to weep over it. His companions asked him to explain the reason of his grief, but he made reply to none until the Mir of Badakhshan heard the news and sent for him to know the reason of his weeping. He related to the Mir that his grief was only because the head was that of an excellent *tullufar* horse. Taj Mughal, seeing that the man had a good knowledge of animals, appointed him as a caretaker of his stable, and asked him to see if there was any *tullufar* animal in the stable. Su Malik saw all the animals and came to the Mir to say that a mare was in foal with a *tullufar*, and that the young animal should be

1. The *tullufar* is said to be the offspring of a mule and a mare. It is said to be very swift and strong.

taken out by opening the belly of the mare, as otherwise she would die in a few days and the colt would be lost as well as the mother. The Mir gave him permission to cut the mare's belly. Thus obtaining the Mir's consent, he performed the operation and secured a magnificent foal. On this success he received a handsome reward and a *khillat* from the Mir. When the foal grew up Su Malik used to take it about with him. The animal is said to have turned out so swift and strong a steed that Su Malik brought him back from a round of 100 miles in four hours. Su Malik then requested Taj Mughal that, as the animal had grown fit for riding, he should hold a Durbar to perform the ceremony of riding the new steed. A day was fixed for the Durbar, and invitations were sent by the Mir to all the officials and headmen of the district. On the appointed day the magnificent Tullufar was brought by Su Malik to the crowded ground caparisoned with gold. When everything was ready, Su Malik begged the Mir to give him permission to show the spectators the animal's swiftness and merits. It was given, and Su Malik who was attired neatly, addressed the Mir in the following way :—

“I, who was brought by your men as a captive from Gilgit, am Su Malik, the Rá of that country, and now I am going back to my native land on this *tullufar* pony of yours. If it is in your power to arrest me now, pray try your utmost! Adieu!”

As soon as he had uttered the above words, he spurred the pony, and galloped away at full speed from the assembly. A number of riders on good ponies were sent after him by the Mir to arrest him wherever they could find him, but in vain, as no one could catch him except one rider on a certain good mare. This man caught up Su Malik in Gujhal¹ territory. On seeing him Su Malik stopped to await his arrival, and to satisfy his curiosity by seeing the excellent mare which had been able to compete with the *tullufar*. As soon as the man approached Su Malik, the latter informed him that one man like him was useless in attempting to arrest Su Malik, that he would lose his own life, and that it was better for him to return with the happy news that his mare was in foal with a *tullufar* colt. The rider was very pleased to hear this of his mare, and returned to Badakhshan to tell to the Mir that he had come back unsuccessful. From Gujhal Su Malik came to Yasin *viâ* the Darkot pass, and found that his sister was badly treated by her husband Farmaish, who had no fear of Su Malik, thinking that he would never return to his country. He was therefore severely punished by Su Malik. Now Su Malik is said to have been given a piece of advice by an old man of Yasin who was well aware of his sudden fits of rage. These he soon learnt to overcome by following the advice, which was not to punish with the weapons at hand, but to start out and search for others at a distance. When Su Malik reached Gilgit, he saw a stranger sitting in his house by the side of his wife, and became so angry that he felt impelled to kill both his wife and the man by means of a big stone which was lying quite close to him. But he remembered the advice of the old Yasini and went out to search for another weapon. In the meantime he came to know that the man whom he had thought to be a stranger was his own son Khisrau Khan, whom he now embraced. In gratitude he sent a good reward to his old Yasini adviser.

¹ Wakhan was formerly called Gujhal, and its people Gujhai. As some Gujhais have come and settled in the upper part of Hunza, that country is now called Gujhal.

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**NOTES ON THE RHOTIAS OF ALMORA AND
BRITISH GARHWAL.**

BY

C. A. SHERRING, F.R.G.S., I.C.S.

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Notes on the Bhotias of Almora and British Garhwal.

By C. A. SHERRING, M.A., F.R.G.S., I.C.S. *Communicated by* R. BURN, I.C.S.

[Read August 2nd, 1905.]

[The term Bhotia outside the districts of Almora and Garhwal is applied generally to Tibetans, but in these two districts it has a distinctive meaning of its own and is applied to a race of men who are not Tibetans but come of Tibetan stock.]

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The accounts that we find about the Bhotias of Almora and British Garhwal in Atkinson's Gazetteer, and the interesting articles written by Mr. Traill, Commissioner of Kumaun, eighty years ago, are at the present time misleading, in that they do not accurately describe the people as they are at this moment. The fact is that the Bhotias have undoubtedly changed in many of their ways and customs, owing to the influences of Hinduism, and that now we have more accurate information than was available formerly.

It is impossible to discuss the Bhotias, as a whole, on the supposition that as we give these people the one name, we can review their habits and customs as if they belonged to one more or less homogeneous tribe. The further our enquiries take us, the more clearly we see that they must be subdivided into their different clans, and each clan must be dealt with by itself, entirely apart from its supposed connection with any other clan. And first of all we have to realize how entirely distinct are the usages and even language in the different subdivisions.

We find that although some of the Bhotias have forgotten the original dialect which was, at one time, current amongst them and now speak the ordinary hill dialect common to the neighbouring hillmen, yet there are five dialects which are still alive, and spoken to some considerable extent. These all belong to the Tibetan branch of the Himalayan group of the Tibeto-Burman family, and give us much assistance in subdividing the Bhotia people.

These five dialects, and the number of persons approximately who speak them, are as follows :—

1. Rankas or Shaukiya Khun (614). This dialect is spoken in Goriphat, Johar, and four villages of Malla Danpur, Almora District.

2. Byansi (1585); dialect spoken in patti Byans.
3. Chaudansi (1485); dialect spoken in patti Chaudans.
4. Darmiya (1761); dialect spoken in patti Darma, all in Almora District.
5. Bhotia or Huniya (820); dialect spoken by Huniyas, Khampas and Bhotias scattered in different places. The term Bhotia is used here in the sense common outside the districts of Almora and Garhwal.

[Note.—This is taken from Mr. Grierson's ethnographical correspondence.]

A Bhotia who talks one of these dialects often cannot understand another who speaks a different dialect. The Bhotias themselves, however, do not admit their Tibetan origin, except the Nikharpas of Milam, in Almora, and the inhabitants of Malpha, in Garhwal. The latter have a number of their clan still living north of Toling in Tibet close to the Pass called Bogo-la.

All Bhotias, except Huniyas, wherever they live, have two castes, *viz.*, Rajputs and Dumras. In the latter they consider Lohars, Hurkiyas, Dholis, Odhs (carpenters), Bajelas (basket-makers), and Bhools (tailors and shoe-makers). There are no Bhotia Brahmans, although there are many Brahmans living in Bhot, *e.g.*, Dobedhiyas, Pathaks, Karakhetis, etc., who perform priestly functions for the Bhotias. These are received on terms of equality by other Brahmans. These Brahmans have entered Bhot from the South, and are in every way the same as their fellow-castemen in the rest of Kumaun. In conformity with these divisions of language it is best to subdivide the Bhotias as follows:—

PARTIALLY HINDUIZED RAJPUTS.

1. The Jethoras who speak the Rankas or Shaukia Khun and live in Goriphat and Malla Danpur and Johar, Almora District.
2. The Tolchas and Marchas of Mana and Niti, in the Garhwal District, and Johar in the Almora District. These have forgotten the old dialect and employ the ordinary hill-language of their neighbours.
3. The Rawats, or Shaukas, or Shokas (a corruption of Sokpa) of Johar, Almora District. These have also forgotten the original peculiar speech of their race and now use the hill-dialect.

NOMINAL HINDU RAJPUTS.

4. Byansis
 5. Chaundansis
 6. Darmiyas
- } living in the *pattis* of Byans, Chaudans and Malla Darma—all in the Darma pargana, Almora District.
7. *Lower caste.*—Dumras, who live through the length and breadth of Bhot in Garhwal, Johar and Pargana Darma, Almora District. These are a clan in themselves, and their customs and habits everywhere are similar.
 8. *No caste.*—Huniyas, who are closely allied to the Tibetans and are Budhists and nominal Hindus both at the same time. They ought not to be called Bhotias at all, in the sense generally understood in the Almora and Garhwal districts, as they are domiciled Tibetans.

JETHORAS.

The name Jethora derived from JETH, or elder brother, is given to those Bhotias who are popularly supposed to be the descendants of the first Bhotia settlers in Johar. They are to be found in the villages of Goriphat, Talla Johar and Malla Danpur, Almora district, and their subdivisions are named after the names of the villages in which they live. Thus we have Papra, Chilkola, Ringwal, Bothyal and Golphal, who are supposed to have come originally from Doti in Nepal. Then there are Namkival, Tangyal, Jai-myai, Pachhain, and Tomkyal, whose original habitat is unknown. The Joshyals claim Jhusi near Allahabad as their original source, and the Barniyas admit a Tibetan origin. The Papras and Barniyas are considered Vaishyas.

The remarkable point with reference to the Jethoras is, that they do not trade with Tibet, and in fact are not traders like the ordinary Bhotias. They subsist by cultivating the soil like the zemindars in the neighbouring *pattis*, and never even visit Tibet. They are a stationary people, who cling to their homes and are rarely seen away from their villages in other parts of the district, and in this respect they contrast strongly with the other Bhotias who live a migratory life, and whose principal object is trade with Tibet, which they visit several times a year and whence they carry merchandise to the foot of the hills.

The Jethoras have a very good opinion of themselves and put forward claims to superiority. They allege that in ancient times they held the Johar *patti* on a contract from the ruling prince, to whom they paid a nominal sum. But this claim to superiority is not admitted by the other Bhotias, none of whom, whether from Johar or Darma, will marry with them, or even eat with them. The Jethoras are quite agreeable to eating *kachcha* and *pukka* from the hands of all other Bhotias. They are becoming rapidly Hinduized, but have not yet adopted all the Hindu customs: for instance, they do not remove their clothes when eating rice and *dal*, and they do not wear the sacred thread. They generally speak of themselves as Rajputs. The gods of their worship are those of the ordinary Hindu religion such as Durga, Debi, Mahadeo. They also worship the mountain Panchachuli and Goril and Maheswar.

While speaking of inferior Bhotias it is to be noted that the term Kunkiya is generally applied to such. Originally the Kunkiyas were slaves, who had received their freedom, but now the word is applied to a Hindu who marries the daughter of a Bhotia, and to his offspring, and finally to any Bhotia, who has gone down in the world, *i.e.*, has fallen from riches to poverty. They are considered to be Rajputs, but of a very inferior type, and other Bhotias, including the Jethoras, refuse to marry with them or eat with them.

MARCHAS AND TOLCHAS.

In Garhwal there are only Marchas and Tolchas, who freely intermarry amongst themselves and accept the daughters of the neighbouring hillmen who are not Bhotias, although the latter will not take the daughters of these Bhotias in marriage, and the alliance is considered one of patronage. Outside Garhwal, Marchas and Tolchas are to be found in Johar of the Almora District. Here Tolchas and Marchas marry amongst themselves,

and Marchas freely intermarry with the Shokas (or SOKPAS), otherwise known as Rawats of Johar. Tolchas go so far as to give their daughters to the Rawats, but refuse to take the daughters of the Rawats for themselves, as they consider themselves as superior. The Niti valley is inhabited by Marchas and Tolchas, and the Mana valley by Marchas only. Malari village is the lowest village in which any Marchas are to be found. Below it and up the Rini valley the inhabitants are all Tolchas. The Marchas of Mana are divided as follows :—

- (1) Malphas, who are really Tibetans, and have others of their clan living North of Torling near the Bogola; but they do not intermarry in Tibet now.
- (2) Badwals, said to have come from Barahat near Gangotri in Tihri-Garhwal.
- (3) Bhatrajias, supposed to have come from the Girthi river.
- (4) Dharkolis, alleged to have come from Malla Nagpur.
- (5) The original inhabitants of Mana.

These five clans intermarry. They are connected with the famous Badrinath temple, being part of the Panch Dimris, *viz.*, Rawal, Dimri, Duryal, Joshyal and Marcha. As the Badrinath temple is on Bhotia land the Marchas of Mana receive an annual payment of fifty rupees in cash, twenty seers of *chana* (gram), and one *pagari*. This is a fixed payment and is conditional on the fact that at the *Janam Ashtmi* festival, when the idol is carried through Mana to be bathed at the waterfall and fed at the Mata Murati, the women of Mana, led by the Malpa women, clothed in festival attire, shall sing hymns in honour of the god.

Passing to the Almora District we find that the Tolchas to be met with in Johar never marry the Johari Shokas, and that only the Garhwal Tolchas part with their daughters to the above.

SHOKAS OR RAWATS.

In Johar there are many divisions of the Shokas, or Rawats: in fact in each village there is a caste which derives its name from the name of the village. No such caste can marry within itself: it must marry outside. Thus there are:—

Pangtiyas, Dhamsaktus, Nikharpas, Nitwals (or Tolchas), Milamwals, Jang-pangis, Burphwals, Biljwals, Martolias, Tolias, Laspals, Paspals, Mapwals, Sumdyals, Pachhpals, Rilkutiyals, and Khinchyals. Some of these affirm that they come from Garhwal; others from Doti in Nepal, or Benares, or Tibet.

The Rawat ancestor of the Milamwals obtained permission from the Gartok Garphan to establish himself in trade, and built Milam and Burphu, and received a grant of Chunpal from the Huniyas. The connection with Tibet is still kept up, in that the headman (*padhan*) of Milam has a so-called Jagir at Khiunglung in Tibet, which entitles him to receive annually as a gift five goats and two rupees worth of *ghi* (clarified butter), and as many beasts of burden or coolies as are necessary for the carriage of his effects, whenever he goes to, or returns from, Missar in Tibet.

The Rawats of Johar are earnestly striving to follow all the ordinances of the Hindu religion, and invariably speak of themselves as Hindus; in fact, so far has their progress

gone that some authorities have classified them as Hindus. There can be no question, however, that whatever opinion these Rawats may hold concerning themselves as orthodox believers in the Hindu faith, the other Hindus do not consider them orthodox ; and the lowest caste will not eat with them, although all, except Brahmans and superior Hindus, will smoke with them. On the other hand, the Rawats and all Bhotias will eat *pakki* (by which they mean cooked food as opposed to uncooked) with Rajputs and Brahmans, and *kachchi* with all except Doms and Muhammadans ; and similarly they will drink with all except Doms and Muhammadans. In Nepal, however, Hindus of the better castes will drink with them.

There could be no greater mistake than to suppose that the Mitakshara law is applicable to any of the Bhotias ; in fact, excluding Johar, the Bhotias do not even know what the Vedas are. It is in questions relating to property, the law of inheritance, adoption and woman's property, that the difference between the Bhotias and other Hindus is most clearly seen. A woman has no special property of her own, although at the will of her husband or father she may be allowed to keep what she earns ; but this is entirely dependent on the pleasure of the man concerned. The laws of inheritance are not those of Hindu law, and the principles applicable to adoption, as found in Mitakshara law, are unheard of. As a matter of fact, in cases of adoption the choice invariably falls upon the heir. The idea of a joint family is quite unfamiliar. The father is the absolute owner of all property, including ancestral, and can mortgage on his own signature without reference to his sons. When the infirmities of age impair the father's business capacity, the sons divide the property and he is more or less at their mercy. There is no fixed share apportioned to him, but custom generally insures that some extra portion is put aside for him, and he lives with the son who is his favourite. Frequently the father is neglected, and cases of great hardship on parents who have been rich, but whose property has been taken by the sons, are often met with. A son can at any time insist on partition. Johar and Mana are exceptions, in that the father can refuse to give his sons shares in his self-acquired property ; but in regard to ancestral property he has no choice.

There can be no doubt that originally the Johar Bhotias followed all the customs and ceremonies at present to be found in Darma ; but since the Butaula Rawats migrated to Johar from Garhwal *via* Tibet, some three hundred years ago, a gradual change has been taking place, and the old customs have given place to the ordinary ceremonies of the Hindu faith, such for instance as *Bratbandha*.

CEREMONIES AMONG PARTIALLY HINDUIZED BHOTIAS.

The following are some of the ceremonies to be found among the partially Hinduized Bhotias :—

Birth.—On the fifth day after child-birth *Pancholi* is performed, the woman and child being allowed to occupy a separate room or house, but no one is permitted to touch them. Should anyone by accident touch them, the only purification is by sprinkling cow's urine on the body and tasting the urine.

On the eleventh day, *Namkaran*, or "name-giving," called *Mishi* in Johar, takes

place. On this day Brahmans purify the woman and the child, and they may then enter the house and touch water. A horoscope is prepared according to the rules of the Jyotish Shastra. When the first two or three children in a family have died young the right nostril of the new-born child is pierced, or the child is given to a *fakir*, who shortly after returns it. When the first-born has survived, but others have died in early youth, a large piece of *gur*, or sugar, is broken upon the back of the first-born, so that the newly-born infant may start its young life with the bad luck of the past broken. A child born in *Mul* and *Ashlikha Nakshitras* is handed over to some third person with whom it remains up till its tenth or eleventh year, the parents not seeing its face till then. After the sixth month *pasani karam*, or *chhoti diwai*, is performed. The Brahmans choose the day, and the child's paternal aunt gives the child *sattu* mixed with curds to lick for the first time. New clothes and ornaments are usually given at this ceremony.

Bratbandha takes place between the ages of eight and twelve years. The sacred thread is not, as a rule, put on at this ceremony; in fact, only a few Bhotias wear the thread, the reason being that the attendant obligation of bathing daily is so irksome in the cold journeys to Tibet, that few care to incur the obligation. However, after the *Brathandha* ceremony they never eat without washing the hands and face, which is a distinct advance on the prevalent dirty habits of the other Bhotias; and the Butaula Rawats go so far as to always do *sandhya* as well before taking food. The *dhoti* is henceforward worn, the hair of the head has been cut short, and the boy can fast and perform Shradha, if his parents are dead. The boy's ears are pierced, and the family priest instructs him as to his future conduct. On the fifth day afterwards *dunkhor* is performed.

Marriage.—In regard to marriage, the ordinary Hindu customs are followed. Some person, often the family priest, is sent in search of a bride. *Mangni* takes place between the ages of nine and twenty-five years; and after the *mangni*, or asking, usually six months elapse before the formal marriage (*shadi*). The *gona*, or consummation, takes place at the age of maturity. In all marriage arrangements the girl is never consulted; the parents on both sides usually make all their plans, absolutely regardless of the children concerned. Every man and woman is married, and this is a notable difference between these Bhotias and those of Darma Pargana, where in every village many unmarried persons are to be found, the reason being that there marriage depends upon the will of the parties, who are always of mature age at the time of the marriage contract; and instances are not uncommon of men and women who have remained unmarried all their lives, because nobody would marry them.

Marriage is (1) by *kanyadan*, the girl being given without a price; (2) by *damtara*, i.e., giving a price for the girl to the parents; (3) by *adala badala*, or exchange, a man giving his own daughter and taking for his son, or his brother, the other man's daughter. Men of position are ashamed to get a girl by *kanyadan*, though they have no objection to giving their own daughters in this way.

Brahmans perform the ceremony according to the Shastras. An altar (*bedi*) is made and fire placed on the top, and at the four corners are little trees, and all round the altar are pine trees. The bride and bridegroom take seven turns round the fire and

the altar, this being the binding part of the ceremony. The bride puts her foot on a *sil*, or stone used for grinding, and as she goes round pretends to slip and is caught by the bridegroom each time, in this way signifying that in future all lovers will be ground to powder.

Before marriage a girl wears a nose-ring called *bali*, but after marriage and until her husband's death she invariably wears the *nath* (nose-ring).

A man can, and often does, have two or three wives. A marriage is always accompanied by lavish expenditure.

Remembering that each village contains a different branch of Bhotia Rajputs, it has to be noted that intermarriage within the village is strictly forbidden; marriage must take place with some one of another village. For instance, a Biljwal cannot marry a Biljwal though he can marry a Martolia.

Widow-marriage, in the sense of a marriage with all the honour and dignity of a first marriage, is unknown.

However, it is a common practice for widows to go and live with other men; but the unions thus created never occupy the same rank in popular estimation as an ordinary marriage, although no disfavour is shown such as outcasting from food or drink. The man in question pays a sum of money to the deceased husband's relatives, who give in return what is usually known as a *ladawa*, or relinquishment. Generally the widow of an elder brother goes as wife to the younger brother.

Divorce is known, and the form of divorce is simplicity itself. A man tells his wife to go, and she leaves him. If she wishes to live with another man the union is not known as a *pakki shadi*, or true marriage. The man in question has to pay for her to her former husband, who on his part gives a *ladawa* or relinquishment. If the divorced woman has daughters by the first husband, he will get the benefit from them, that is, he will receive the money for them when they get married, and they are his heirs and not heirs of the second husband.

Death.—The funeral ceremonies are on the analogy of the Hindu rites. If a boy dies before the *bratbandha* ceremony he is buried, and not burnt, and salt is put into the grave with him; otherwise the usual custom is cremation. All the sons and kinsmen of the *gotra* shave the head, moustache and beard, and the eldest son sits in *gat kriya*. If the eldest son is not at home the second son takes his place, and if no son is at home the priest does the duty. The kinsmen of the *gotra* fast for one meal.

Gold, called Hiran, is put into a dying man's mouth, and after death the body is tied in a coarse white winding-sheet (*katara*) and fastened on to the bier (*jhanji*), and over all is thrown a silk shroud (*pitambar*). The funeral procession is composed of mourners who go bare-headed preceded by three boys, or men, holding a strip of white cloth one at each end and the third in the middle. This is called *bat*. After them comes another man throwing *khila*. This peculiar custom is unknown in Kumaun or Garhwal amongst hillmen.

At the pyre a head-bone is kept to be thrown into the holy lake of Mansarowar, or into the Ganges; and until the opportunity for doing this may come, it is put aside with some gold in a small brass box in the hollow of a tree or under a stone. All the

mourners present at the cremation bathe, and on their return are purified with cow's urine, when they receive two loaves of bread each called *chhak*. On the tenth day the pollution, *chhut* or *shutak*, leaves the kinsmen, who then bathe and put on new or clean clothes. A death in a village is considered unlucky, and people avoid undertaking any particular ceremonies from which they hope that success will ensue.

On the twelfth day the ceremony of *godan* is performed, and afterwards the kinsmen touch the *pipal* tree and wear *pithawa*.

The kinsmen abstain from flesh until the fifteenth day, but the eldest son abstains for a whole year, that is, until the performance of the annual death-rites, or *barsi*. These rites are repeated from year to year.

After the touching of the *pipal* tree it is a common thing for the son to go on pilgrimage to the Mansarowar lake, or Hardwar, in order to cast the head-bone of his father into the sacred waters.

Worship.—As is to be expected, we find that some of these Hinduized Bhotias still worship Tibetan deities. For instance, the Nikhurpas, who eat and drink with the Johar Rawats and marry with them, worship the god Dhurma. This deity is specially sought after in the rainy season when the people have tired of a long spell of wet weather and hope by propitiation of the god to effect a change in the climatic conditions prevailing. Two poles are fastened in the ground; to the top of one is fixed an iron or brass trident surmounted by a yak's tail, and to the top of the other an image (*murti*) of a man's head. Throughout the ceremony of worship music is played, and finally a goat is slaughtered. Meanwhile the devotees are anxiously awaiting the moment when the god will manifest himself by taking possession of one of the throng. Suddenly some man is seized by the religious frenzy, and rushing forward drinks the blood of the goat, and in this ecstatic state dances round the poles; and finally climbing the pole, which holds the idol, he imprints a bloody kiss on the mouth of the deity. A temple with rooms has now been built in honour of Dhurma: this is a new departure, for hitherto he owned no habitation built by men's hands.

Similarly, at Burphu and Tola, the Tibetan god Lhamsal is worshipped. The people fell a large tree, and carrying it to an open space fix it in the ground and make it firm with three ropes. Strips of cloth of every description are then fastened to every portion of it, and yaks' tails are tied in different parts of the tree; after these preparations the people sing and dance round the tree for three days on end. Persons who have had a son born to them are especially devoted to the worship of this god, and once a year offer a goat and liquor.

One of the most remarkable deities worshipped in Garhwal is the god Ghantakaran or the bell-god. It is common to find a large bell, sometimes one-and-a-half feet long, suspended to a cross-bar supported by two uprights on the top of some lofty mountain. The lonely goat-herd, or the zealous devotee, rings the bell when passing the spot. The bell-god is very specially worshipped for nine days from Utraini in the month of Magh; and in this special and remarkable service there are associated with him three other gods, *viz.*, Kailas, the Tibetan deity; Kumer; and the deity Nanda Devi. The last named is the loftiest mountain in the British Empire, 25,650 feet high, and is situated in

Bhot, and the first is a most sacred mountain near the Mansarowar Lake and is revered by Buddhists and Hindus alike, and is commonly known as the abode of Shiva. The annual adoration takes place at Pandukeshar in Garhwal Bhot, and the ceremonies are specially interesting as they afford an instance of the religious fervour, or ecstasy, which seizes the devotee and makes him act as though goaded by a mania. An iron tripod, *janti*, is made red-hot in a furious fire, which is zealously fed by the crowd. The men who are particularly favoured by the manifestation of the gods are Duryals of one family, living in Pandukeshar. At the present time Gobind Sing is the favourite of Nanda Devi, Dharma of Kailas, Mehrban Sing of Kumer, and Debu of Ghantakarn. Only the gods Kailas and the bell-god manifest themselves; when the religious excitement is at its highest the two favourites of these gods suddenly rush down to the river and bathe, and dripping with water they rush towards the scorching fire. The crowd with cries of, "Behold the god!" rub butter on the hands of the one who is devoted to the bell-god, and he immediately raises the red-hot tripod and inverts it over his head and puts it back, while the other leaps into the flames and leaps out again. This is the description of an eyewitness.

The deity Acheri is worshipped everywhere and is called Nungtang in Pargana Darma. When anyone has sore eyes, or a lingering illness, the goddess has to be appeased and her influence (*dos*) removed, and this is effected in one of two ways. Either a brass dish (*thali*) is put on an earthen pitcher (*ghurra*) and is beaten until the affected person begins in a frenzy to dance, and indicates what particular sacrifice will find favour with the deity; or a dooly is made with sticks and cloth, and is worshipped with cakes (*puris*) and lights, after which it is carried to some lonely spot and left, the hope being that the malevolent influence is left with it.

The Jethoras worship Balchan and Runiya, and the Milamwals resort to Sain when a sheep or goat is lost, and the deity leads the worshipper in his search for the straying animal. When bears are doing much harm to the sheep and goats, or when an animal is sick, goatherds whether in pargana Darma, or Johar or Garhwal make supplication to the brothers Sidhuwa Bidhuwa. It is also interesting to note how particular deities go out of fashion; for instance, Bir Singh and Jammu Danu are no longer worshipped as they were heretofore.

Apart from the above deities, the Bhotias who are partially Hinduized worship all the gods of Hinduism. Devi and Nanda Devi are particular favourites everywhere. As many as two hundred and fifty goats will be sacrificed to Devi at one time, as well as many buffaloes. The Bhotia Rajputs eat the flesh of the goats themselves, but Dumra Bhotias eat the flesh of the buffaloes.

Food.—The Rawats of Johar are more Hinduized in some ways than the Jethoras, Tolchas, and Marchas, for they know of Gotra, Sakha or Pravara, whereas the latter do not. The question of taking food with certain persons and not with others, which is of absorbing importance to the ordinary Hindu, is treated in some respects very seriously; for instance, the Rajputs do not eat with Bhotia Dumas, and in other respects very lightly, in that they are quite willing to eat with cow-killing Tibetans. Bhotias do not care, as a rule, to partake of the Tibetans' food, solely because the latter are abominably filthy in their

habits, and generally eat rice and meat which is only half-cooked ; while Bhotias who are of much better social condition and enjoy greater material prosperity look with contempt on such poor food ; but supposing that the food is properly treated and rationally prepared all Bhotias will willingly join Tibetans at a meal. The Johari Rawats profess not to eat with Tibetans but only to drink tea with them. As a matter of fact, the beverage called tea contains in it besides tea, large quantities of butter, salt, *sattu*, and frequently flesh, so that the above professions of the Rawats are scarcely true. All Bhotias, whether of Niti Johar or pargana Darma, eat wild boars and fish of every kind, but not snakes, lizards, jackals, beef, fowls, or the long-tailed goat, except the Dumra Bhotias who eat the two last named. In Johar the men eat first and then the women, and leavings are always for women and juniors. In pargana Darma there is no custom of eating the leavings, as men, women and children all sit down and eat together. It is impossible for the Bhotias to worship any of their deities without plentiful supplies of the liquor called *jan*. This is a fermented liquor and differs from *daru*, which is distilled ; both are made from rice, wheat and grain of all kinds, such as *palti*, etc.

Dress : (Difference between Pargana Darma and the rest of Bhot.)—In the matter of dress there is a great difference between the Bhotias of Garhwal and Johar and those of pargana Darma. The men, it is true, generally dress in woollen stuffs of home manufacture, their garments being the coat (*anga*) trousers (*paijama*) and cap (*topi*) familiar to all hillmen, and very generally a long frock coat (*bakhu*), while their shoes are the same as those worn everywhere in the hills, though sometimes they wear woollen boots of chequered colors which come from Tibet, and are soled with rope very ingeniously and finely plaited. These boots are called *baukch* or *babch*, and are found everywhere except among the Jethoras who do not visit Tibet. They cost three to four rupees a pair. The women, on the other hand, are different to the ordinary hillwomen. The Mana, Niti and Johar women wear a skirt (*lahanga*), coat (*kurta*), waistcoat (*tawa*), and shirt (*angia*)—and finally a head-gear (*khupi*) which goes one to one-and-a-half yards down the back, and with which the face can be covered. The custom of *pardah*, i.e., covering the face, is extending, but happily the practice of close seclusion at home is unknown. However, *pardah* is so far known that the elder brother never sees the face of his younger brother's wife, nor does he ever speak to her or go into the same room with her. Gold ornaments are very common with the women of the above locality, whereas they are unknown among the women of the Darma pargana, except in a few of the very richest families in *apatti* Byans.

The Darma pargana is divided into three *pattis*, viz., Byans, Chaudans and Darma, and the residents in these three *pattis* have customs which distinguish them by a sharp line from all other Bhotias ; and, further, the customs of the three *pattis* are not all exactly alike. The women of Darma pargana wear a short-sleeved coat (*chung*) which reaches down to the ankles and is fastened round the waist : a skirt (*phu* or *bala*) which is fastened round the waist by a long sheet like a *dupatta* (known as *jujang*) : a cap (*chugti*) on the head, and after marriage a much larger cap of thicker cloth (known as *chukla*). In case of mourning the *chukla* is worn inside out. The nose-ring (*nath*) is unknown in *patti* Darma and Chaudans, and the Byansis replace it by an ornament in

the shape of a clove (*bira*). The hair is plaited into a tail which comes down to the shoulder-blades, and in Chaudans a little lower. The front hair is plaited into slender threads (*tzi*) which are very carefully arranged on both sides of the face, and a silver chaplet invariably holds the plaits in place (known as *anjang*). Long woollen boots imported from Tibet (*baukch*) complete the description. Richer women wear in addition two sleeves (*rakalcha*) which are pulled on over the arms.

The spelling of different words in the Bhotia dialect cannot be adequately compassed by the Hindi vocabulary: the Tibetan alphabet alone expresses the sounds properly. There is no written character for the Bhotia dialect.

Birth.—We cannot expect to find the Brahmanical influences strong in the Darma pargana as there are no resident Brahmans whatever, and the Bhotias being a migratory people, it is difficult for them to call in their assistance, when they are on one of their trading excursions. Still the Brahman with his supposed knowledge of the stars and skill in prophetic announcements as to the future has a peculiar charm for this superstitious race, and certain individuals acquire a degree of popularity, such as the Brahmans of Legam in Nepal and Charma in Askot, and their help is much sought after in the framing of horoscopes. To ascertain with accuracy the exact time of birth recourse is had to the water-clock, and the hour thus recorded is kept with jealous care until a visit can be conveniently made to the Brahman, who will, after due consideration, authoritatively declare what name is the most fitting for the child, having regard to the position of the stars and the period of the calendar. The names so given are invariably of the purest Hindu type, such as Lachh Ram, Dharm Sing, etc., but meanwhile the impatient family has already named the new-born child with some truly Bhotia name, which will cleave to that child throughout its life notwithstanding that the Brahman has given it another orthodox and auspicious name. This fact will account for the double names that are so familiar. Side by side with the well-known Hindu types we have names such as the following:—

Names of animals, as, *mushiya* (mouse), *kukuria* (little dog), *hansu* (swan, in Byans), *maina* (bird), *bandar* or *bandaru* (monkey), *bila* (a cat), *nikhi* (dog), or the girl's name *Wom-bari* (*wom* = bear, *bari* = wages); or to avert the jealousy of the gods, evil names, as *Dam* (let the scoffer note that this means blacksmith), *pang* (a Tibetan), *chhora* (a slave), *khyembo* (a Tibetan word meaning a wanderer), *dola* (a beggar).

Tibetan names are not uncommon, such as, *chhiring*, which is derived from *chhi* life, and *ringbo*, long.

After childbirth the mother is kept in an outhouse for ten or eleven days, but if there are only fifteen days to the end of the month, then till the last day of the month. The ceremony which marks her return to the house is called *milin khu kwormo*, taking near the fire, and is celebrated by feasting, and offerings to the gods, and prayers. The feasting consists in eating the offerings which are composed of rice and *puris* and *dalang*. The *dalang* is so typical of all Bhotia ceremonies that it merits description. *Sattu* or flour is made from parched grain, and this *sattu* is worked into a cone one-and-a-half feet high, pointed at the top and large at the bottom, and from the sides of this cone stand out spikes of *sattu* from the base to the vertex. The *dalang* occupies a leading place in all social rites, and so important is it that the binding part of the

marriage ceremony (to be described later) consists in the bride and bridegroom breaking a *dalang* and eating it.

The ears of the child are pierced at an early age, as men, when old, are partial to ear-rings and pendants, and women at all times wear ornaments in their ears. In the case of a girl the women make a ceremony out of the custom and formally eat parched grain (*pu*).

After the birth of a man-child it is the father's important duty to present it together with two *dalangs* at the *saitthan*, or shrine of the god, on the annual festival of *milu changmo* (from *milu*, spite, and *changmo*, throw away), which is held for the special purpose of averting the evil eye, and removing the jealousy of the gods, from the crops and baby-boys. The *saitthan*, or god's place, is a little chamber a yard in length and the same in breadth, and two or more yards in height, in which there is a white stone, *viz.*, the familiar *ling*, and on the top of which there is a small branch of a tree adorned with narrow strips of white cloth (*daja*) which flutter in the wind. The villagers gather together at the *saitthan* bringing with them plants of every description from the fields, and flour made from the phapar (called *sili*), and when all are assembled the plants are twisted and plaited into a wreath, and a venerable elder, chosen by popular acclamation, is placed on a commanding spot and given a sickle, and near him is placed the *sili* or flour. It is the duty of the old man to strike the wreath in such a way that the flour sinks into the interior and intermingles with the leaves, and to exclaim: "Begone, the evil eye and the jealousy of gods and men." The wreath is then taken to the nearest cross-roads, and after the discharge of fire-arms is left at the parting of the ways.

In the case of a first-born male child in certain villages of *patti* Byans such as Garbyang, Budhi, and Kutu, and the Nepalese village of Tinkar, the father holds an annual festival called *barani*, or *barai*, at which with considerable expense he feasts the men of the whole village with boiled rice, and next morning they resort to the *saitthan*, taking with them a long slender tree, cut just above the roots, thirty to fifty feet in length and with branches springing from the top (called *darcho*), which they erect in front of the shrine. These shrines can generally be recognized from a distance by means of these poles, or *darchos*. The little boy is then brought, dressed in his best and on the back of his mother, and the father presents five sheep and two *dalangs* to the god. The sheep are to be killed with one stroke of the *kukri*, and should the striker fail, the onlookers immediately mulct him of a four-anna piece for every failure.

In the *patti* Chaudans the father has to present his boy-baby formally to the elders (*panch*) with two "*dalangs*," and they with equal formality overlook the boy. This ceremony usually takes place in the months of *Sawan* and *Bhadon* on some date which is mutually convenient, and a different date is fixed for each parent in the village who wishes to present a son born that year, and each presentation implies a feast to the elders.

As a boy grows up he is taught some profession, and, at the age of twelve years, he is expected to be fit to enter upon his own line of life. As long as his father lives he is compelled to place his earnings in his care, but should he outrival his parent and brothers in business capacity, he is given great freedom of action. With regard to joint

property, and partition, and the rights of the father as against the children I have already noted above. It is not to be forgotten that each son can claim a share irrespective of the number of wives that his father may have: for instance, if there are two wives, and one has one son and the other two, the shares will be one-third each, and not half to one and a quarter to each of the others.

Marriage.—The Rajput Bhotias of *dattis* Darma, Byans and Chaudans intermarry freely, and it is a recognized rule that marriage must take place with some person of a different village, and that if the contracting parties both belong to the same village it is absolutely necessary that they should be the descendants of different stocks. The best marriage for a man is with his father's sister's daughter, or his mother's brother's daughter; but a man may not marry his father's brother's daughter, or his mother's sister's daughter. Similarly, a girl should marry her father's sister's son, or mother's brother's son, but not her father's brother's son, or mother's sister's son. There is no prohibition against a man marrying two sisters, but they cannot be his wives both at the same time: after his wife's death he can marry her sister. The Hindu custom of comparing horoscopes is never followed.

In *patti* Darma the practice of *mangni* is found, but in *pattis* Byans and in Chaudans it has been unknown for the last thirty years. When a boy is two months old or more his father sends bread and wine to the father of some girl younger than his son with whom he wishes his son to contract matrimony. If the latter breaks and eats the bread and drinks the wine, the arrangement is considered to be established. Two to three years later the arrangement is kept in memory by the boy's father sending a large vessel of liquor to the girl's parent, and there is feasting of friends and relations. Finally the actual marriage (*shadi*) takes place when the girl is between seven and eleven years of age, and the *gona*, or consummation, at the age of maturity. On all occasions great care is shown in choosing lucky dates.

But although the practice of *mangni* is found, still it is by no means common. Practically the universal custom of the three *pattis* Darma, Byans and Chaudans is to arrange marriages at the *rambang*, which is the village club and generally a very disreputable place. The Bhotias of Johar and Niti look down upon the *rambang* and will have nothing to do with it in their own country, having given it up many years ago, still they are quite willing to avail themselves of the *rambang* when they visit pargana Darma. In every village a house, or some spot, is set apart which is called *rambangkuri* or place of the *rambang*, at which men and women meet and spend the night singing lewd love-songs and drinking and smoking. Married and unmarried men go there, also single women, and married women up to the time that their first child is born. Girls start to go to the *Rambang* from the age of ten years, and practically never sleep at home after that age, the result being that a virtuous girl is unknown in pargana Darma. As is to be expected, a system such as this leads to the freest intimacy, and one sees a man walking about with his arm round a girl's waist, both under the same covering shawl, a practice common in Europe but rare in the East. Modesty is unknown, and there is a boldness in the faces of the women. Intentional miscarriages of illegitimate children are not at all uncommon.

Large villages have more than one *rambang*, and, as the avowed object of these *rambangs* is to arrange marriages, only those persons resort there who can marry one another, such as the boys of a neighbouring village, or, if of the same village, only those who are not relations. When a resident of a distant part of the country comes to a village, travelling on business, he would not dream of asking his friends to give him food and shelter, for this would be regarded as a disgrace: he must wait to be invited by them first. However, if he goes to the *rambang* he is sure of a hospitable welcome. In this way the *rambang* is a great convenience, but it can only be used thus by persons known in the village. A stranger is unwelcome without an introduction.

When the Bhotias are travelling or go to their winter quarters one of the first considerations is to set apart some spot for the *rambang*. If girls wish to invite the boys of a neighbouring village to meet them they wave long sheets, one girl holding one end and another the other end. This waving can be seen for miles, and is really a very pretty custom. It is also used in bidding farewell to friends and lovers, and is frequently accompanied by whistling, the two fingers being placed in the mouth as in the familiar London cat's call. Boys and girls are both adepts at this whistling, and it is the usual method employed by the boys of inviting girls to come out of their homes. On hearing the whistles the girls take a little fire and issue forth from their houses and proceed with the boys to the chosen spot, and, if they are old friends, they sit side by side round a blazing fire, otherwise all the boys sit on one side and the girls face them.

Often the girls dance, and sometimes the boys, while singing, smoking and drinking are continued until they are all weary, when sleep brings quiet to the scene.

The Bhotia songs, called *bajyu*, or old-fashioned, are the general favourites with the elders, and are always sung by the company with a fervour that shows how keenly all appreciate the formidable vicissitudes of climate, and the terrible hardships of mountaineering, or the brave deeds of their ancestors, which are faithfully portrayed in them. These songs of a bygone time, composed in the Bhotia language, are now supplemented by others in the ordinary hill-dialect, of which those called *timali* most closely resemble in their serious nature the old *bajyu*, whereas the gay *tubaira* (*tu* = fleeting and *baira* = a song) is full of levity, hilarity, and wantonness.

The Bhotia is a wise and cautious trader and circumspect in all his dealings, and it is not to be supposed that he allows the passion of the moment to override the value he attaches to a powerful alliance through matrimony with a rich neighbour's family, and therefore in almost all cases a young man takes his parents, friends and relations into his confidence with regard to the object of his affections, and it is only if the arrangement appears to be a satisfactory one that they advise him to make an offer of marriage. And we must remember that the young ladies of these parts are allowed full liberty in exercising a preference, and, further, that if they do not find a wooer they have the certain prospect of remaining unmarried all their lives. In every village there are women who have grown old and have never known wedlock, and similarly there are men (I know one of a leading position and great wealth) who fail to find a mate owing to some physical defect or bodily infirmity.

After due consideration the young man, either personally or through his friends,

offers the girl a sum of money (*lakchhab*) varying from five rupees to one hundred bound up in a piece of cloth. Generally the young lady is not directly approached, but the gift is handed over to her intimate associates (popularly called *taram*, which means literally a key), and they promise to exercise their influence with her. Her answer is not obtained without a family consultation of her relations, and should the match appear a suitable one the gift is retained, otherwise it is returned. In the case of acceptance the *tarams* always pose as having been indispensable.

In fixing a day for the marriage, Monday is carefully avoided as that is universally considered an unlucky day, and although the date thus fixed is well known by both families, a pretence is always kept up that the girl's parents are not going to let her go willingly. Therefore, when the bridegroom (*byolishya*) leaves his house to fetch his bride (*byolo*), his father summons his son's friends (called *dhami*) to a feast quietly at night, and subsequently they are despatched by him with secrecy in the dark hours in the company of his son to the bride's village. Arrived at the village they go to the *Rambang* where they find the bride and her bridesmaids (*shyasya*) with whom they consort for a time, and then carry off the bride in their arms. They convey her only a short way to keep up the semblance of forcible removal, and then wait and call the bridesmaids, and with them proceed homewards until they reach the groom's house, outside which they all sit down. Each one of the groom's women relations brings them a glass (*lota*) of liquor (*sagun*) to show the pleasure felt at the marriage, and in the name of all the gods they drink to future happiness. On entering the house the first part of the binding ceremony of marriage is performed by the elders of the village, who produce two *dalangs*, two glasses of liquor and rice, and calling all the gods to witness, break off the tops of the *dalangs* and give them to the bride and bridegroom to eat and the liquor to drink. Feasting now commences, which lasts for a fortnight, each family of relations taking it in turns to entertain the bridal party; and *jan* is drunk until, as a Bhotia described it, a man "is bathed in drink." Then follows the second binding ceremony—*puris* are given to the groomsmen and bridesmaids, and also a waist wrap (*jujang*) to each of the latter, and then the formal rite of *datu* takes place, *i.e.*, small pieces of *dalang* are broken off and put in a dish and the couple are made to exchange by giving a piece with one hand and taking with the other. This ceremony, done before the gods, with the elders and bridesmaids as witnesses, ties the final knot of wedlock. This is known as a *patham* day, that is, the releasing of a girl from her house, and the local blacksmith claims a gift (*dasturi*) which takes the form of money or a blanket. The bridesmaids are then allowed to go, but the groomsmen, who have by now become their firm friends, take them into their charge and feast them for some days. Before they are allowed to depart they combine in erecting as a sign of the marriage a *chandan*: that is, they place two long poles in the ground (*darchos*) and fasten a rope between them, and on to the rope they tie all sorts of things, such as, caps, books, mirrors, *dajas* of different colours of cloth, scissors, etc., and no one would dream of removing any of them. Subsequently it is a point of honour for the bridesmaids to invite back the groomsmen, a few at a time, and return their hospitality in their own village.

Keeping up the semblance of a forcible removal, on the day when *datu* takes place,

two envoys are sent from the groom's village to the girl's father, who ask the village elders to help them to persuade the father to accept the *fait accompli*, and present him with liquor and cloth. This ceremony is called *binti*, or intercession. The father proves reasonable, and a day is fixed for the bride and bridegroom, with two or three others, to pay their first visit to his house (this visit is called *nashi*). On the appointed day the groom's party arrives with sheep and goats for liquor and *sattu* for *dalangs*. In the early morning two sheep or goats are slaughtered, and the liver being removed is carefully examined by the local seer, who foretells the future. Before the village *panch*, or gathering of elders, twenty-nine rupees are tied up in white cloth and handed over; seven rupees being the mother's milk-money (*nuthung*, *nu*=milk, *thung*=drink), known as "*dud mol*" in Kumaon, and twenty-one rupees for the father, and an extra rupee to make up an odd sum, odd numbers being considered lucky. If the father is a rich man, he refuses to receive his share, looking upon the payment as the Joharis do upon *kanyadan*. Cloth is given to each relation and to the village headman, and *dalangs*, meat and drink are offered to the gods and then consumed. The tops of the *dalangs* are broken and pieces exchanged as in *datu*. *Jan* is given to the father and mother and relations, as well as to the *panch*, in small cups, and in each case a rupee, or an eight-anna piece, or some other coin, is presented to the drinker in the cup. This rite is known as *yar*. Finally, on a lucky day, the bride and bridegroom are allowed to go home, but not till each relative has given the bride cloth for a covering (*barko*) or dress (as *jujang*). Her father, however, gives her nothing as he is considered to have done his duty to her, while unmarried, in presenting her with jewellery, and it is known that he will give presents afterwards up to the time of the birth of her first child.

It sometimes happens that a girl is carried away in reality by force from the *rambang*, but unless and until she eats *dalang*, *datu* and *jan* with her captor she is not considered to be married to him. If she is conniving at the elopement, against the will of her parents, and formally eats and drinks the ceremonial food, in process of time her relations are compelled to accept what cannot be mended. There have been instances when three parties of boys have been determined to carry off the same girl, and have blocked all the tracks, the girl being finally taken off across an almost impossible mountain-slope; but such cases are not the common practice of the people.

Divorce and Remarriage.—The customs of divorce and remarriage are very similar to those among the Johar and Niti Bhotias. In divorcing a woman the husband gives her a *thán*, or piece of white cloth (known as *jujang*) in Byans and Chaudans, and a sum of money, rupees twenty-two, in *patti* Darma. The cloth is invariably white, the idea being to give her, and her children by any subsequent marriage, purity and legitimacy, and until the cloth is given no divorce has taken place; in fact, should a man elope with another man's wife (*chalu*) he is shoe-beaten, and his goats and sheep stolen from him with their packs (*karbaj*), and the children are illegitimate. The husband, or any of his close relations, can so treat the erring man, or any of his close relations, and in doing criminal work it is useful for the Magistrate to be aware of the universal practice. The children are known as Teliyas until the second husband, or his children, have held a formal *panchayat* with the first husband, or his descendants, and an official account has

been taken of the original husband's marriage expenses, and these have to be made good, and it is only then that the white cloth is given which sets the woman free. An accompanying final ceremony is the waving of a fowl round the head of the woman and the man, and the heads of the members of the *panchayat*. There is no means by which a wife can claim a divorce, and if a man takes a second wife, and refuses to release the first, there is no way in which he can be compelled to release her however unhappy she may be, and she cannot marry again unless she has been properly released. However, in common practice a second wife is only taken with the concurrence of the first, generally in cases of sterility, or on the definite understanding that the first wife will be released.

A woman who has been married to a man and refuses to join him, and remains with her father instead, must be formally divorced, her father paying all the husband's marriage expenses, and the latter pays her a sum of money (*pati* or *nakhsira*) and gives her the white *jujang*. But should she die at her father's house before her formal release, her husband must perform her funeral ceremonies, though, should her father agree, he can give the formal divorce after her death, and before the time of the ceremonies. Great importance is attached to this, because the father and her relations consider it an unholy thing to mix her "bone" (to be explained later) kept after the death ceremonies with the family bones, unless a proper divorce has taken place.

Funeral ceremonies.—In regard to funeral ceremonies and customs a distinction is drawn between little children and grown-up persons, the line of separation being the permanent teeth. As soon as the milk teeth are being replaced by the permanent ones a child passes from the one category to the other. Little children are wrapped in wool and buried facing the east, the head being to the north and the feet to the south, and little is done in the way of ceremonial, though, should the child be on the point of getting its second teeth, children of a similar age are feasted on boiled rice. The dead body of grown-up persons is placed in a white cotton bag (*katro*) with the knees touching the chin, and not at full length as is the practice of the Hindus: further, the bag is sewn with thread spun contrary to the usual way. The bier is the same as that used by Hindus, *viz.*, two poles with slats of wood across. The corpse is then placed on the bier with the face to the east and is tied to the poles by a cord, and is carried head foremost in the procession. To the front of the bier is fastened a piece of white cloth, cotton if the deceased is a man, and woollen if a woman (the latter being specially prepared by the womenfolk for themselves), which is carried by the deceased's sisters, nieces and daughters on their heads in front of the bier, their *chuklas*, or head-gear, being turned inside out. The cloth is known as *am lugara*, *am* meaning a way and *lugara* cloth, the signification being that the spirit or soul of the deceased can be thus easily guided forth. The procession is led by a young boy or girl with fire in the hand for the funeral pyre; next come the women holding the *am lugara*, the nearest relation going first and others behind her in order of closeness; then the bier carried by four men-relations, *viz.*, one at each pole-end (it is absolutely necessary that the leaders should be near relatives); and finally the villagers with fuel for the cremation. On the way to the pyre all men-relations walk with their caps doffed.

The burning-place is usually on the bank of a river, or a brook, and the pyre is formed

of a stone enclosure (*rhapa*) six feet long and three feet wide, filled with wood, spaces being left to give free access of air. The clothes worn by the deceased at the time of death are placed among the faggots, and the corpse having been put on the top with face towards the east by one of the mourners, the bag, or *katro*, is cut at the face, and a piece of precious metal, such as gold or silver, or even a pearl (*akchhya*, from *ak*=mouth and *chhya*=food) is placed in the mouth, the corpse being supposed to become "*sudh*," or purified, thereby. Oil is poured over the corpse, and finally branches of the sacred *dhupi* tree, found in the high hills, are cast on the top, and then the whole is fired. No one remains to watch the cremation, but the mourners almost immediately wash their heads, hands and feet, put their caps on and their head-dress (*chuklas*) straight and return to the home of the deceased. Here they purify themselves in the smoke of a fire made of *dhupi* wood and then go to their own homes.

On the following day a few men and women proceed to the burning-place and pull down the enclosure (*rhapa*) and wash the place and remove one of the burnt bones. The men doffing their caps and the women turning their head-dress (*chuklas*) inside out, solemnly bear the bone enclosed in an iron, or tin-box to the place (each village has one or more) of dead men's bones. Here they are met by others, who did not accompany them to the pyre, with parched grain (*pu*) and *sattoo* or moistened flour (*du*) and other things necessary for the coming ceremonial, which is a part of the funeral rites (*dhurung*) which will subsequently at another time be carried out in full. To screen the spot from the vulgar gaze two curtains are erected on both sides of the place, the girls hand parched grain (*pu*) to the men, and then two of them, one with a cup of flour (*du*) and the other with a jug of water, sprinkle on the ground, while the men dig a hole and put the bone with its case into the ground. After this four reedsticks are put up at the four corners, four feet apart, like boundary pillars, and the tops are joined by three threads of different colours, *viz.*, red, white and yellow. Next immediately above the interred bone a forked stick is placed in the ground, and from one arm is suspended a pair of new shoes if the deceased is a man, and a pair of long boots (*baukch*) if a woman; and from the other arm is suspended a gourd full of water. Below the gourd is a plate with flour (*du*) on it covered with *ghi*, or clarified butter, and as there is a small hole in the bottom of the gourd, water drops continually on the food beneath.

That night there is given a funeral feast, and very special provision is made for the soul of the deceased. A stone is placed upon two sticks, these being pushed into the wall outside the house or into the roof outside, and a little cooked rice is put on it, and the elders of the village make special prayer, beseeching old souls, called *yishimis* [*yi*=old and *shimi*=a breast, but in this instance it means the soul of one whose death ceremony (*dhurung*) has been performed], not to appropriate the food for themselves and thus deprive the deceased. Great care is taken to renew the food thrice daily before the family takes its own food, and it is not until the *dhurung*, or death ceremony, has taken place that this giving of food ceases. At the funeral feast of the first night large balls of cooked rice, as big as cricket-balls, are prepared and are distributed (called *rham*) next day by two unmarried girls, each family in the village receiving two. These girls wear, although unmarried, head-dress (*chukla*) which only married women wear, and one of them carries a

basket (*doka*) full of these balls on her back, and it is curious to note that the basket is tied by the very same *am lugara*, or white cloth, by which the corpse was led to the pyre.

From this day onwards up to the *dhurung* ceremony, all singing is stopped among relations, and men may not wear a turban, or a ring on the right ear (the left is immune), nor may they shave, or crop the head; similarly the girls, who are related to the deceased have to eschew rings on the right hand, and allow two frontal hair-plaits (*tzi*) to hang down on each side of the face, and sometimes they go the length of putting off all jewellery for three years with the exception of a coral wreath and a bracelet. Should the deceased have died far from home, they are anxious to ensure the spirit finding its way across difficult places on the route, and, therefore, when returning home, they lay a thread of wool on the ground to guide the spirit of the deceased. In Chaudans this custom has been given up.

If the deceased has succumbed to some infectious disease such as smallpox, or cholera, the corpse is not burnt, but buried, or is thrown into the water, and in this case no bone is retained except a tooth to be put in the place of dead men's bones. Such a horror have they of leprosy, that if the deceased has been a victim to this dread disease, they simply cast the corpse into the water and retain nothing, not even a tooth.

The distribution of rice-balls to the villagers is an important ceremony, and should the death have occurred at a distance from home they make a point of performing it on their return.

In *pattis* Byans and Chaudans cremation follows death immediately, but in *patti* Darma burning takes place only in the month of *Kartik*, and the corpses are interred in the ground during the interval and are exhumed in *Kartik* for cremation. This is a filthy and most insanitary practice.

Dhurung or Gwan.—The Bhotias of Pargana Darma all speak of the funeral ceremonies as *gwan*, and these rites are still found among certain Bhotias near Jumla in Nepal, who are said to have migrated from *patti* Byans. They were undoubtedly practised in the past by all Bhotias in Johar and Niti and Mana, but at the present time the Rajputs have entirely abandoned the custom, which is only followed in those parts by the Domra Bhotias, and as the people of those parts have also forgotten the Bhotia language they have applied the hill-word *dhurung* to what is universally known as *gwan* in the Bhotia language. The origin of these rites and the practice of cremation is prettily told in the common story which all Bhotias tell: An old man in days long gone by, when the world was young, lost his only son, and in his agony of grief determined to go even unto heaven to plead for the life that had been taken from him at the feet of *Miyar Misru* (*Miyar* means heaven) the god omnipotent, creator of all things. He arrived in time to see that *Misru's* own son, his only son, had just died also, and he witnessed the cremation and other ceremonies that were done in heaven, and *Misru* told him that when death did not spare him the omnipotent what could he do to assist terrestrials. Returning to earth the old man taught the Bhotias all that he had seen, and henceforth they followed the heavenly ritual, only substituting stone for gold in the cremation enclosure (*rhapa*), wood for silver in the bier, and wood for silver in the fuel of the pyre.

In Byans and Chaudans there is only one *gwan* ceremony for the deceased, and it

can take place either in June for those who have died during the preceding eight months, or in October for those who have died since the June ceremony. In *patti* Darma there can be more than one *gwan*, and there are generally two to four, the number depending upon the means of the deceased's family.

As the time for *gwan* draws near, the members of the family summon the village elders to fix a date, and some time during the waning moon is chosen. The interval is spent in making preparations: *jan* or spirit is brewed from rice and barley, and the grain of the *phapar* is parched (*phuru*), and above all things sheep, goats or yaks are sent for from Tibet. In the ceremony of the *gwan* an animal is always made to represent the deceased and is called *ya*. In *patti* Chaudans and half of *patti* Byans a yak is always chosen, and great care is taken to see that its forehead, back and tail are marked with one continuous blaze of white. But in *patti* Darma and the remainder of Byans, the influence of Hinduism has made the people give up yaks (except the Domras, of whom later) on the ground that they are cows, and sheep and goats are selected instead. The selection is left to the spirit of the deceased, which marks its approbation by making the approved animal shake its tail, while the relations throw rice on it. The sex of the animal follows the sex of the deceased. An indispensable part of the ceremony is the presence of a *seyaktza*, who is an old man well-versed in the lore of the future world, and it is his duty to remind his listeners, by the narration of old stories, how the *gwan* and other funeral ceremonies arose, and to instruct the spirit of the late deceased (*nushimi*, *nu* = new) as to the paths it should follow and the dangers it should avoid in reaching heaven. The word *nushimi* is in contradistinction to *yishimi* (*yi* = old) or spirit, whose *gwan* ceremony has been performed.

The ceremony can be performed in four days, but as the ceremonial of the first day has to be performed on a different day by each family of relations in turn, the total number of days depends upon the number of families concerned. Before the first day there is a large amount of bread made by the women relatives and neighbours, and next morning each family in the village receives one loaf in exactly the same way as the rice-balls were distributed (*rham*), the bread being put into the *doka* or basket and the *am lugara* being used as before.

The first day is known as *shin gumo jya*, or wood-collecting day, this being the meaning of these three words in this very order, as large quantities of wood are collected for cooking purposes and torches to be used on the subsequent days. The principal ceremony on this day is known as *ya shammo* or the leading forth and bringing back of the *ya* (*shammo* means go and come back). After a feast of rice the *ya* is taken to a spot outside the village by the relations, who also take with them many kinds of parched grain (*pu*), a suit of clothes and a few ornaments, and having reached the given spot the girls give the men grain (*pu*), and the deceased's clothes are tied by a white cotton cloth on to the *ya*. Grains of barley are thrown on the *ya*, and it is solemnly stated that the *ya* represents the deceased, and old spirits, *yishimis*, are besought not to take the food of the lately-departed spirit (*nushimi*). Then a solemn procession is formed in exactly the same way as when the corpse was taken out for cremation, viz., the *am lugara*, or cotton cloth, is fastened to the horns of the *ya* and is carried by the girls first with

chuklas, or head-dresses, reversed: these are followed by the *ya*, and last of all come the men with heads bare. On entering the village the *ya* is fed with wet flour (*tzama* corresponding to Kumaoni *uwa*) in a cup and a little spirit (*jan*). Again, on reaching the house of the deceased, the *ya* is fed with rice and liquor (*jan*), and the clothes of the deceased are removed.

The mourners are either *putie* (from *pu* = parched grain and *tie* = with), that is, those distant connections who come only with offerings of parched grain or a little rice and spirits, or *myechame* (from *mye* son-in-law, brother-in-law, uncle-in-law, and *chame* girl), who are sisters, etc., of deceased, or of the husband of deceased, and bring with them a sheep or goat as well as what the *putie* bring. A good deal of food is required for the feeding of the *ya*, and the mourners bring offerings for his nourishment. Should the deceased be a man his mother's brothers also attend and are called *puwahiya*, this expression being never used on any other occasion. These bring sheep and goats, etc., and sufficient rice to feast all the villagers on the second or third day. The *myechame* girls never, if possible, come alone; they almost invariably bring their husbands with them, or some other man whom their husbands delegate, the reason being that they have important duties which are most suitable for men to perform, *e.g.*, to lead the *ya*, or make boots for the burnt bone (*hri*) of the deceased to be placed in. These boots are called ghost-boots, *shimi babch* or *baukch* and are some six inches long, being simply a round cylinder of cloth with a leather sole, the whole very diminutive and very coarsely prepared. Again a tablet of accounts is to be drawn up, written with wet flour on a wooden slate, showing for the edification of the dead exactly how much flour has been used in making cakes (*puris*, Bhotia *ja*). Another duty is to get the sticks for the erection of the dummy figure of deceased and so on—duties most suitable for men to perform.

From the very first day there is continual dancing on the part of the villagers in front of the house where the *gwan* is taking place, and they are fed with rice or *puris* (*ja*). The second day is known as *ya kummo jya* (*kummo* meaning to go and come back), and closely resembles the first day, the *ya* being taken out and clothed and led back in exactly the same way, the only difference being that on the first day all the villagers go, and on the second, only the near relations. On this day rice is boiled (*ya chhaku* or *ya kum chhaku*, *kum* being connected with *kummo* above and *chhaku* meaning boiled rice), and is given both before and after the leading ceremony to all relations.

The master of the ceremonies is called *Chhangma*, and needless to say that his principal work is to see that there is no lack of the "barley bree" and that there is plenty of good fare for all. He sees that proper persons are set apart to make the *shimi babch* or ghost-boots, and the frame for the dummy figure, and that fuel wood is collected; and, in fact, that everybody has something to do.

The third day is *zam kummo*. In the early morning all the villagers go to the deceased's house; the men receive a little *sattu* and liquor and their wives two cakes (*puris*) each, and then they take the *ya* and go to the place of dead men's bones (*ya shyam*) where deceased's bone is lying in the casket. Great care is taken to insure privacy by again putting curtains on both sides while the case is being taken from the ground, and when extracted the case is immediately placed inside the ghost-boots, which have been made

during the preceding night. After this the procession wends its way exactly in the same way as on the first and second days. As it enters the village, the *ya* is fed by everybody with rice and liquor, and the relations actually escort it to their own houses and feed it there, and the *myechame* man who leads the *ya* comes in for his share of good things. The men at the end of the procession discharge fire-arms as they move along, and throw grain (*phuru*) over the *ya*. The final feeding is at the house of deceased, where outsiders first give it food, and then, lastly, the family members. After this the clothes are removed and conveyed inside the house with the bone in the ghost-boots. Here a dummy figure, resembling the deceased, is prepared by pushing three sticks into a reversed basket, the sticks being wide apart at the bottom and joined at the top. As one stick is longer than the others, it serves for the neck and head. A fourth stick fastened at right angles makes the arms. Over all these the clothes are placed and a rough representation of the deceased is made. The four walls of the room are hung with clothes of every description on ropes going from corner to corner (*chandan*). The *seyaktza* who is versed in the knowledge of the future world is seated by the figure, and forthwith begins his stories of the ghost-world and tenders his advice to the departed soul as to the dangers of the road that have to be encountered; nor must the old man relax for a moment in his duties during the whole of that day and all that night, he sleep never so oppressive.

The practice in Chaudans is slightly different, as the figure is made in a field, and one field is set aside for the use of the whole village: the bone, however, is kept in the house, and the *seyaktza* watches over it till midnight.

All the relations of the deceased bring balls of rice which they place in front of the dummy figure: these are kept for a while and are finally thrown away outside the village, together with the tablet of accounts and the stone on which the spirit's daily food has been placed. A place is set apart in the village (called *mabang*) where all the villagers dance during the *guan* days, and where they receive cakes (*puris*) on this the third day. Then comes the weird ceremony of the formal dance executed by all the men of the village (they are called *garkhal*) in a long row. They come dancing up to the deceased's house and are feasted, contributions of food being levied from all relations, if the people of the house are not rich enough to incur this expense. The feasting is called *garkhal chhaku* (rice). As this dance proceeds metal dishes and cooking-utensils are taken out of the house and beaten by the men, while the girls carry torches in their hands; and finally all resort to the *mabang*, where the dancers go round in one direction and the others in the opposite direction beating the vessels and holding torches, and throwing different kinds of parched grain (*pu*) and little pieces of cloth. This ceremony is called the *garja pashimo*, the latter word meaning to go round; and after this the men do not doff their caps to the dead.

The last day is *ya pongmo* (rooting up of the *ya*), on which they get rid of the spirit of the deceased. The venerable *seyaktza* having finished his last words of advice to the soul, the clay figure is taken out and the clothes removed and put on the *ya*, the wooden frame being cast away, and a *myechame* man leads forth the *ya* to a distant spot from the village; and, on this occasion, all the villagers beat the poor victim to drive it away, and

chase it to prevent return. In Chaudans it is allowed to roam free on the mountains, but elsewhere low-caste Bhotias or Tibetans speedily despatch it and eat the flesh. So pleased are the villagers that the spirit has departed, that they return singing and dancing and distribute amongst themselves cakes with little ears attached (*puris*). This is called *rhashimo*, from *rha* clean, *i.e.*, purification. Men and women shave, cut their hair and wash their heads and wear rings on their ears and hands. As to the bone, half is taken and buried in some lofty spot, and the other half is taken to some sacred place such as Kailas or Mansarowar by one of the household, who remains unkempt until he has deposited the bone in its final resting-place. Each of the mourners gets either some cloth or a vessel as a present. Formerly, in patti Darma, if any onlooker wished his descendants to note that he desired his own obsequies to be performed on a magnificent scale, he blew a trumpet and announced the fact publicly, and woe betide any heir who failed after that to do all honour to the spirit of the deceased. A widow throughout the whole of Bhot leaves off all jewellery for a year or more, and also the *nath* (nose-ring). If she marries again she reassumes the nose-ring (*nath*). A widower does not now, in any place in Bhot, leave off the loin cloth (*langoti* or *dhoti*) or any other garment, as noted in the Gazetteer. In former times monuments and images used to be made in honour of deceased persons, and can still be seen in Chaudans, but they are not made now.

Religion.—It has been already described how the Bhotias erect *saithans*, or shrines, for their gods, but most frequently we find a simple stone, and by it a *darcho* (a tree-trunk with a few branches left on the top) fixed in the ground with strips of cloth (*daja*) floating in the wind tied to it. The general form of worship consists in the cooking of *puris* (cakes) or rice, and preparation of *dalangs*, which are offered with liquor. Small pieces of the food are broken off and thrown with both hands towards the seat of the god; bits of cloth are torn up and similarly thrown; the liquor is sprinkled with two pieces of grass, one in each hand, towards the same spot; and sometimes the worshippers offer burning lights. Meanwhile a man brings water in a *lota* or glass (called *rhati*, from *rha* pure and *ti* water) and puts into it an old coin, which must on no account ever afterwards be spent; and also a sprig from the *dhupi* tree, part of the sprig protruding from the glass. Fresh *dajas*, or strips of cloth, are tied on to branches and put over the *saithan*, and prayers are offered. Goats and sheep are often slaughtered in numbers, and the ceremonial is as follows: A man sprinkles water on the animal, and as soon as it shakes its body to throw off the drops, everyone realizes that the deity has accepted the sacrifice, and immediately its hair is pulled out in tufts and thrown towards the shrine, and then the animal is despatched. Fresh blood is taken from its breast by tearing open the skin, and is sprinkled on the *ling* which is inside the shrine, and the horns are cut off and placed on the shrine with some of the brains mixed with rice placed between the horns. Removing the skin, the liver, diaphragm and lungs are taken out reeking, and are carefully examined by the diviners for portents as to the future. The art of divination is in great request, but diviners are few, and amateurs are chary of meddling with the terrible possibilities of the unknown. These rites are faithfully carried out before the annual exodus to the lower hills and on return from below to their homes, and also at *shankrant* in the month of *Bhadon*. Formerly the liver was torn from the living animal, but at the present

time this barbarous custom has been given up, and the internal portions are only removed after death, but while they are still reeking hot ; and many animals are slain before the desired signs are apparent.

The *Bhotias* are a most hard-working, practical race, and yet they are most superstitious. They are always at work, both men and women, and in their idlest moments, for example at the *rambang*, they are still making thread for weaving, and in all their business they are most capable and clear-headed—still this is the race that is in the clutches of a superstition that saps the very life-blood. They attribute all sickness to evil spirits ; they place an axe at the door of a house where anyone is seriously ill ; when they take a sick man to see a European doctor they fasten a sickle round his waist to fend off the evil one ; a returning traveller, before entering his village, confines thorns and nettles under stones, thinking that in this way he has laid the evil spirit ; and this practice is common at the heads of passes, near dangerous bridges, or in difficult places. For the cure of sickness these people resort to burning and bleeding in a manner that makes the civilized beholder sick to look at, and these barbarous remedies are made more effective by incantations. They no longer believe that a thunderstorm will take place if they rub their metal vessels clean with earth in the usual manner (a belief that at one time made the inhabitants of *patti* Darma notorious for their filthiness, for they cleaned their vessels on their wearing apparel instead, and never washed themselves or their garments) ; but they do believe that they must fire off guns to prevent the blacksmith (*kaliya*) from seizing the deities of the sun or moon at the time of an eclipse, and their other beliefs are on a par with this. They worship at all the Tibetan monasteries in the same way as the Tibetans, and they consider the Tibetan places of worship very sacred. They worship the same deities that they find the Tibetans worshipping when they make their trips for trade purposes into Tibet, and they worship their own deities and also the whole host of Hinduism, or rather, to be accurate, all those that they have heard about, for they are only dimly initiated into the mysteries of the Hindu faith in the supernatural.

Each village has a deity of its own, and each *patti* has its own favourites, but the deity *Gabla* is universally worshipped with offerings of goats, sheep, *dalangs* and rice (*sherje*) as being the most powerful, and his votaries resort to him for removal of rain or snow, or with prayers for success in business, or similar matters. Similarly the goddess *Nyungtangsyä*, or water-goddess, is everywhere worshipped ; one particularly sacred spot being Kalapani, where the river Kali, also known as the Sarda, is supposed to have its source, the object of the worship being to ensure a perpetual flow of the water. *Puris* are made and offered upon her *saihan*.

In all villages we find tree-trunks with branches (*darcho*) placed in front of houses and at *saihans* with flying streamers (*daja*), to propitiate the local deities on occasions such as the house-warming of a new building or when there has been trouble, the poles being placed in the ground at the beginning of the new month. When Bhotias leave their homes to trade in the warmer south they place baskets, just like waste-paper baskets with the bottom knocked out, full of thorns and twigs, on the courtyard walls of their deserted homes, to preserve the empty tenement from unwelcome guests of the spirit world.

In the village of Kuti we have the god *Gulach*, and in Nabi the god *Thakpung*: the

people of Gunji worship the goddess *Namti*, who corresponds to *Debi*, and definite rules exist as to the quantity of the offerings, *e.g.*, every four men must provide one sheep, but if the group is less than four, then every two men must provide one goat. The inhabitants of Chhangru have their own deity. This village is just across the border in Nepal, and is therefore politically Nepalese, though physically it should be British, together with the village of Tinkar, as these two villages are cut off from Nepal on all sides by impassable glaciers. The deity *Madeu* watches over the safety of Chhangru and holds the place of a village watchman in the popular estimation. At a time of drought or excessive rain, the inhabitants of Garbyang turn to Kungr, and offer him wet flour, or dry flour, on his *sai-than*, according as they desire the rain to stop or come on.

But the most potent deity of all in the estimation of the people of Garbyang, Budhi and Chhangru is *Namjung*, the name being taken from a mountain on which can be distinctly seen two stone figures from a great distance: the mountain is called Sunpatti Shoka. The figures are sitting, and the story is that a *shoka* went to carry off a girl to be his wife, but to avoid matrimony the damsel hid herself and was frozen to death. He searched for her and eventually met the same fate. This deity is principally worshipped for the prosperity of the eldest son at the *barani* or *barai* ceremony described above.

The men of *patti* Chaudans place their faith in *Shyangse* as the most powerful god, and hold an annual festival *shyantung* in his honour. No particular date is set apart for this festival, but it generally takes place in *Asauj* or *Kartik* (end of September or beginning of October). Goats and sheep are not sacrificed at the *saithan*, but at the homes of the villagers.

In *patti* Darma the noble group of the Panchachuli mountains dominates the minds of the inhabitants, but they are known locally as Miyula, and the goddess on the summit bears the same name. The mountains in this part of Bhot are particularly awe-inspiring, and the only pass Neo Dhura leading to Tibet is so dangerous on account of glaciers, that all traders fasten a long pole across their bodies to preserve them if they fall into the crevasses when they journey across these forbidding heights. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that *Chan* is worshipped for mountain-sickness, when a man faints from the rarified air, and the offering takes the form of covering a goat with red earth, and either killing it or letting it loose to wander at will in the mountains: undoubtedly there is implicit faith in the efficacy of this offering.

There is a dual deity *Kibang Rangchim* who is both male and female, the one name signifying the former and the other the latter. The god is usually represented by two stones, and worship takes place between the two.

Apparently there is only one deity *Nungtang* who is worshipped solely by women among these Bhotias of pargana Darma, and the worship takes the form of offering sticks with streamers one inch broad and a foot long attached to them. It is a very pretty ceremony and is supposed to be of special avail for sore eyes, or when a patient is suffering from the evil influence of a god.

Domras or *Dumras*—The low-caste Bhotias are composed of blacksmiths (*lohar*), drum-beaters (*hurkisa*, from *hurka* a drum), *dholi*, from *dhol* a drum, carpenters (*odhs*), basket-makers (*bajelas*), tailors and shoe-makers (*bhools*) and others. They only intermarry

amongst themselves, and their customs throughout Bhot are similar, bearing a general resemblance to Darma customs. In the funeral ceremonies (*guan* or *dhurung*), which they practise on the lines of the Darma Rajputs, they generally use a buffalo, which in some places they finally chase and kill with stones, sticks and knives, and in others, like Chaudans, they call in their fellow-castemen from the next village, and exhort them to kill the victim, and insist that death must be with one blow; otherwise, if the animal dies by a torturing death, they threaten that, on a future occasion, they will also torture in their turn the funeral victim of the other villages. The *dhurung* in Mana is only practised below Joshimath, and persons go that distance to perform it. The Dumra Bhotias do not give gifts to Brahmans, and they consider the sister's son to be the family priest, in fact they do not resort to the Hindu hierarchy.

Huniyas—The Huniyas derive their name from Hundes, the portion of Tibet opposite the Almora and Garhwal districts: they are Bhotias in the meaning attached to that word outside the Almora and Garhwal districts: they are also called Khampas, Bidesis and Jarhs. They intermarry with each other but not with Bhotias, of these districts, who do not apply the term Bhotia to them at all. The Bhotias, however, eat from their hands and with them. They are really Tibetans and intermarry with Tibetans. They are Buddhists but also worship the deities of Kumaon. They eat the flesh of the yak, but sometimes profess not to do so in British Territory, such is the influence of Hinduism, the yak being considered a cow. They practise polyandry, but only the brothers, and they true brothers, resort to the same woman as their joint wife. Some wear pig-tails, and some *chutiyas*, and some wear neither. Again some cut their hair and others do not.

Trade.—No account of the Bhotias can be complete without a notice of their trade, for they are traders from childhood, with the exception of the Jethoras. In the past the cardinal principle to be remembered has been that the Tibetans will only trade in these parts with those persons with whom they can eat. There are exceptions, *e.g.*, the Duryals in Garhwal, who are the descendants of Brahmans and Chhatris, and the inhabitants of Pangla in Chaudans, have been allowed to trade, although they are not Bhotias; but the general rule is certain, *viz.*, that as the Bhotias alone can eat with the Tibetans, they alone can trade with them. Another rule has been that trade can only take place through what is known in the business world as "house-connections." Formerly, so far was the custom pressed, that only certain Bhotias could go to certain marts, but time had already broken down this restriction to a great extent, and although there have been difficulties yet there has been also a much greater freedom. Taklakot or Taklakhar, known as Purang by the Tibetans, has led the way, and trade has been possible there even without a "house-connection," although the drinking of tea has been a necessary part of all business. Now the Treaty of Lhasa, of 1904, has introduced free trade and changed the old order of things.

The trade figures are as follows in rupees:—

		1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
British Garhwal.	Native Garhwal ...	55,000	78,000	27,000
	Mana over the Mana Pass, called Tunyi-la by Tibetans ...	33,000	37,000	43,000
	Niti over the Niti Pass, called the same by Tibetans ...	1,63,000	1,42,000	1,31,000
	Johar over the Untadhura Pass, Tibetan Kyunamla ...	3,05,000	4,21,000	3,92,000
Almora.	Pargana Darma—			
	1. Over Lipu Lekh Pass, Tibetan Jang Lhaura ...	5,76,000	4,98,000	4,87,000
	2. Mangshan Pass, Tibetan same ...			
	3. Lampiya Kuti La, Tibetan same ...			
	4. Neo Dhura (for <i>patti</i> Darma) Tibetan Nooi La or Shekhu La ...			

Of this about four lakhs go over the Lipu Lekh Pass, which is a very easy one. In 1841, the trade over this Pass was only Rs. 35,900, showing that the trade has increased since then elevenfold. Meanwhile, over the Johar Pass trade has, in the same period, increased only $2\frac{1}{4}$ times. A further point of interest is that, between 1872 and 1902, the population in Johar has increased 13·75 per cent., and in Pargana Darma 93·12 per cent. About 80 per cent. of the trade of the United Provinces goes through the Almora District. The wonder is not that the entire trade is so small, but, considering the execrable routes, that there is any trade at all. The principal imports are borax, salt and wool, and exports grain, sugar and piecegoods.

This Memoir does not enter into points of similarity and dissimilarity between this interesting people and the Tibetans living immediately across the border; nor does it treat of the past commercial political history of the Bhotias, all of which subjects amongst others are treated at length in "Western Tibet and the British Borderland," by the present author.

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RELIGION AND CUSTOMS OF THE
URAONS.

BY

THE LATE REV. P. DEHON, S.J.

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Religion and Customs of the Uraons.

By the late REV. P. DEHON, S.J. *Communicated by* E. A. GAIT, I.C.S.

[Read July 5th, 1905.]

[Owing to the sudden and lamented death of its author, this paper has not received revision in proof at his hands. It is published, but for the addition of a table of contents and for very slight omissions, as he left it. No one was better qualified to speak of the Uraons than Father Dehon. *Born in Belgium in 1856, he came to India in 1883 as a member of the Society of Jesus. He was ordained priest in 1888, and commenced his career as a missionary shortly afterwards. He was in charge of the work in the Noatolli district for about three years, and in 1895 founded the station of Mahuadand in the Chechharri, where he laboured for the remainder of his life. It was while returning to this station, in spite of poor health, that he died at Rajhara on June 27th, 1905.—ED.]

INTRODUCTION.

The Uraons or Oraons, or, as they call themselves, *Kurukh*, are a Dravidian cultivating tribe of Chota Nagpur. Their traditions say that their original home was in the Carnatic, whence they went up the Narbada river and settled in Bihar on the banks of the Sone. Driven from Shahabad by the Muhammadans, the tribe split into two divisions. One of these followed the course of the Ganges and finally settled in the Rajmahal Hills, where their descendants are now known as *Ma-le*; while the other ascended the Sone into Palamau, and, turning eastward along the Koel, took possession of the north-western portion of the Chota Nagpur plateau. They still speak their own tribal language, a dialect of the Dravidian family which, according to Dr. Grierson, is more closely allied to Canarese than to any other Dravidian language spoken in the South of India.

The number of persons enumerated in Bengal under the head Oraon at the census of 1901 was nearly 600,000, of whom about half were in the district of Ranchi; and there were in addition nearly 60,000 Christian converts of Oraon origin. About 20,000 members of the tribe were found at the same census in Assam, whither they had gone to work as coolies on the tea-gardens.

A general account of the Oraons will be found in Dalton's *Ethnography of Bengal*, and they are also described by Mr. Risley in the *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*. The following interesting notes by the Rev. Father Dehon deal mainly with their religion and customs and contain much information on these subjects that has never previously been published.

E. A. GAIT.

* [These particulars are derived from the *Catholic Herald of India* for July 5th, 1905.]

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I.

ETYMOLOGY OF THE NAME.

The etymology of the name is most obscure. Can it be derived from Rawana whom they consider their first ancestor? They call themselves *Kurukh*. Some say that they emigrated from the Konkan, with which they connect the term *Kurukh* ascribing the divergence between the two words to their own partiality to guttural sounds. It seems, however, that the original meaning of the word was "hill man."

The emigrants to Assam, Bhutan and Calcutta are called *Dhangars*, which simply means "contract labourers," as will be seen in the explanation of the word later on.

The Hindus and Muhammadans among whom they live, give them the nickname Kol, though they are of Dravidian origin.

ORIGIN OF THE PEOPLE.

All that they know about their origin is that the name of their first ancestor was Rawana, a famous king who lived in the South. One of their legends which they recite when offering a kind of sacrifice to *Dharmes* (God) (see *Pal-khansna*) seems to be only a mutilated fragment of the old Hindu legend about Ram, Lachman, and Sita, when Rawana, the King of Lankapur runs away with Sita, Ram's wife. This might perhaps throw some light on the subject, though it is a very doubtful hypothesis. The only more or less general tradition they have is, that, after much wandering they at last settled at Ruidas, where they built a fort to protect themselves against the attacks of the Hindus or Muhammadans (they don't know exactly which), but they are convinced that the fort was built by them. They were victorious in several encounters, but once on a feast day they all got drunk. At night the enemy came, captured the fort and cut them to pieces. Some, however, managed to escape, and as they were pursued divided themselves into two parties. Some fled towards Palamau, whilst the others directed their course towards the Rajmahal hills and now form quite a separate tribe, the Malé. The first party, most probably finding Palamau too hot a place for them, did not settle there but crossed the

hills towards Lohardaga and found themselves among the Mundas. The hypothesis that they were allowed to settle among them is likely to be true, and for anyone who knows these two tribes, there is nothing astonishing in the fact that the Mundas retreated slowly and left the new-comers in possession of the country. Even now we witness the whole process as it must have been going on in former times. In new countries where land has been only recently reclaimed from the jungle, the Uraons settle, and, as they are an exceedingly prolific tribe, they soon become the preponderant element, whilst the Mundas, being conservative and averse to live among strangers, emigrate towards another jungle. The Mundas hate zemindars, and, whenever they can do so, prefer to live in a retired corner in full possession of their small holding; and it is not at all improbable that, as the zemindars took possession of the newly-formed villages, they retired towards the east, while the Uraons, being good beasts of burden, and more accustomed to subjection, remained. Of course this is only a hypothesis, as there is not the least scrap of documentary evidence to help us to solve the problem; but its likelihood is increased by the position of the Bhuniyars, whom Colonel Dalton in his most valuable book calls Bhunhiers. There is not the least shadow of doubt about the Bhuniyars: they were the first settlers in Barway, Chhechari and Sirguja, hence their name Bhuniyars, which means "first settlers." Look at the map of Chota Nagpur, and it will be seen that Barway, Chhechari and Sirguja are separated from the country first occupied by the Mundas and Uraons by a chain of hills and *pāts* running from Palamau to Palkot. Well, these Bhuniyars are only the descendants of a few Mundas who had crossed the hills and settled in Barway and Chhechari. This is proved by their similar traditions, the tombstones which are exactly the same as those of the Mundas, the similarity of their customs, and the names of some villages. Is it not very likely that, as the Uraons increased in number, they spread from the side of Lohardaga towards Palkot, whilst the Mundas retreated and left their brethren of Barway and Chhechari separated from the main body? By degrees also the Uraons emigrated from Kukra, crossed the mountain and came to settle in Chhechari and Barway where the same process takes place. The Uraons take possession of the low lands, whilst the Mundas retire to the small plateaus or high lands on the mountains. Colonel Dalton speaks of the Bhuniyars as being a different race and does not know how to classify them; but for one who has lived a long time among them there is no doubt at all. Some old men of Barway still remember that when they were young, their fathers were still in communication with the Mundas of Nagpur. The Bhuniyars of Sirguja being the farthest away from the Mundas are known only by that name. In Chhechari is the transition stage, and they are called Bhuniyars or Mundas indifferently, whilst in Barway, where they are the nearest to the old stock, they will only accept the name of Munda. Now that their relations with the Mundas have ceased and they have lost their language, and have moreover abandoned the local traditions and gods of the Mundas, they are likely to form a different caste. Up till now they affirm that when they go to Nagpur and explain everything to their *bhais*, they are looked upon as being of the same caste; but they do not intermarry. This digression about the Bhuniyars seems to take us away from the Uraons, but it shows the likelihood of the hypothesis explaining the process by which the Uraons took possession of the

country, and serves to rectify what Colonel Dalton wrote about the Bhuniyars. (See Dalton's *Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 133.)

II.

RELIGION OF THE URAONS.

The religion of the Uraons is a mixture of the old practices and ideas they have brought from the south, with the new practices and ideas they have adopted from the Kols, and the different tribes among whom they live. It would be difficult to separate the old practices from the new ones and draw an exact line between what is entirely of Uraon origin and what has been borrowed by them from other people. However, this can be ascertained to a certain degree of exactness.

The mythological faculty of the Uraons consists of three doctors.

1. The *panch*. As the *panch* plays a great rôle among the Uraons it is well to know exactly what it means. According to the etymology of the word it should mean a body of five men; but it is not so. The *panch* is the whole community represented by its eldest members or represented by the *sankatalas*.

2. The *pahan*, or *baiga*, or village priest.

3. The *ojha*, or *mati*, or *dewair-Augurer*, conjurer, sorcerer.

Within the province of the *panch* represented by the *sankatalas* lie the old traditions of the tribe.

The *pahan* or *baiga* is in charge of the tutelary divinities of the village, and he has to officiate at the chief feasts. He acts for the community.

The *ojha* is in charge of the *bhuts* or devils: he has to find them out and drive them away. For the ceremonial part of their cult three men might be added, namely: (1) the *panbhara* or acolyte who helps the *pahan* in his different functions. (2) The *pujar* or *vice-phan* who sacrifices to the *bhuts* in the great feasts and takes the place of the *pahan* when he is absent. (3) The *sokha*, who, though being a man *sui-generis*, and having nothing in common with the religion of the Uraons, is the head sorcerer to whom they have recourse to find out witches.

In connection with the religious practices, the *Nagmotia* or snake conjurer, and the *onrha* or *ottonga* who offers human sacrifices might be added.

All these, the *panch* or *sankatalas* being excepted, are the same for all the aboriginal tribes living in Chota Nagpur; so that all, except for a varying number of peculiarities, have the same religion. It is remarkable that in all that is purely of Uraon origin, any man who knows the ceremonies can officiate, whilst in what is common to all the tribes, only the elected representative can perform the ceremonies.

Within the province of the *panch*, that is, all that appertains to the old Uraon traditions, we have—

1. The worship of *Dharmes* or God.
2. „ „ „ *Baranda*—the avenging angel.
3. „ „ „ *Chigri Nad*—the spirits of the Asur women whose husbands were destroyed by Bhagwan.
4. The cult of their ancestors.

Worship of God.—There is no doubt that the Uraons have a more perfect idea of God than the other tribes. They call him *Dharmes*, viz., “the beneficent one,” and look upon him as their creator, but they have a very poor idea of his providence. He is far above everything, and has given the management of the world into the hands of tutelary divinities and *bhuts* or devils whom they have to propitiate. As there are bad men and good men in the world, and God does not interfere, so there are good and bad divinities whom God leaves quite free to act as they please. Of course, the intercourse of the Uraons with the Kolarian tribes has spoiled, to a certain degree, their first idea of a supreme and almost immaterial Being. With the Kols the Godhead is nearly identical with the sun. The word for God common among them and the Hindus is *Bhagwan*, and it is remarkable that the words *Dharmes* and *Bhagwan* seem to have different meanings for the Uraons. When they use *Dharmes* the idea of God is entirely separated from the sun, whilst when they use *Bhagwan* they naturally look to the sun as the Kols do.

The Uraons invoke God in their greatest difficulties, and especially when having had recourse to the *pahan*, *ojha* and *sokha* they have found everything useless; then they turn to him and say: “Now we have tried everything, but we have still you who can help us.” They sacrifice to him a white cock. They wash the feet of the bird and cut its throat with a knife, saying, “God, you are our creator, have mercy on us.” This sacrifice of a white cock to God is offered at all the feasts and when the sorcerer drives away the *bhuts*.

Here we come to what seems to have been the most ancient form of worship among the Uraons. They look upon God as being too good to punish them, and therefore they do not think that they are answerable to him in any way for their conduct; they believe that everybody will be treated in the same way in the other world. Everybody will be reunited to his ancestors, and everything will go on in the other world nearly as it does in this. Only everybody will be happier. There is no hell for them, no place of punishment. They say they go to *Merkha* which corresponds to heaven. The Red Indians speak of the happy hunting-grounds and the Uraons imagine something like the happy ploughing-grounds where everybody will have plenty of land, plenty of bullocks to plough it with, and plenty of rice-beer to drink after their labour. Hence they have no anxiety at all about their future life, provided that they conform to all the customs imposed on them by the *panchayat* of the other world, which they personify under the name of Nasre. All their anxiety is about this world, and all their religious practices tend only to worldly things, namely, to get good crops and be free from sickness. It seems that the Uraons at first attributed all the evils of this world to the evil eye and evil mouth. Hence their most ancient practice of the *palkhansna*. They believe that envy distils from the eye and mouth of the envious man a kind of poison most fatal to crops and men. Let a man but come, stand before their field and look at it and say: “What a beautiful field it is, most promising,” and it is enough to throw the master of the field into the greatest anxiety. Let a big official come into their country or any notorious stranger; if his visit is followed by some misfortune, the failing of the crops and especially the sickness of children, these misfortunes will infallibly be attributed to his evil eye. It is really wonderful how much they worry themselves about that evil eye and evil mouth. In this they believe God interferes, and they have recourse to him in the *palkhansna*, i.e., the breaking of teeth.

Palkhansna.—This is the work of the *Sankatalas* representing the *panch*. This is not done on behalf of the community, but simply for the benefit of an individual and his family, to counteract the effects of the evil eye and evil mouth on man, animals and fields. This ceremony is performed in every house twice a year in June and at the feast of the *Karam*, but everybody according to his devotion can have it performed as often as he wishes. The *sankatalas* being called, the house is swept and besmeared with diluted cow-dung. He then takes his seat in the middle and draws first a figure more or less in the form of an egg, and then along the circumference seven small half circles to represent the seven parts into which the world was divided (figs. 1 and 2). The big circle represents the rainbow or God's granary. As they have only three words in their language for the series of colours, so they use only three colours to represent the rainbow. They use the red dust of the burnt mud of their hearths or *choolhas*, the white flour of the yeast they make use of in making *hanria* or rice-beer and pounded charcoal in this shape.

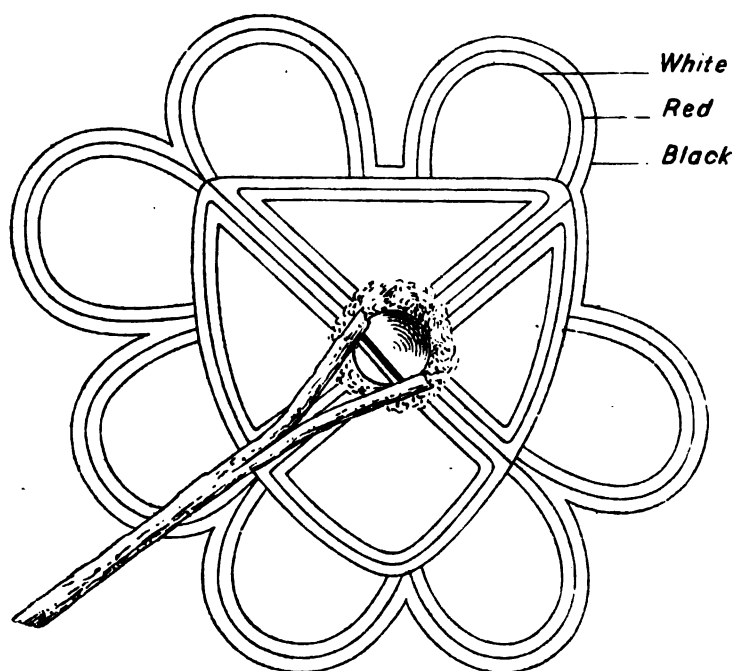


Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

In the centre the officiating man puts a handful of rice, on which he places an egg, and having cut two twigs of the *Keont* tree, he joins them in the form of an angle. Sitting then with his face towards the east, he draws two intersecting lines with

diluted cow-dung, and in one of the angles formed by these lines he puts five small pieces of wood representing the *panch* or *panchayat* of the village. He then puts on the egg the angle formed with the two twigs of *Keont* and begins to sing two chapters of what seems to be their Genesis. Here is a literal translation of it :—

“The world, having been devastated by fire, began to look like copper. The smoke was ascending to heaven. Hanuman was the nephew of God. God told him : ‘Be on the watch, and when half of the world is burnt, sound the drum to give the alarm.’ The baboon went on a *keont* tree and was so absorbed in eating the fruits that he forgot the order. Suddenly the flame reached his hind quarters, he got burnt and clapped his hands *loco dolenti* and then rubbed his face with them. From that time, the wound never got cured and his hands and face are black. *Dharmes* (God) was very fond of him, and when he came to apologise, he did not upbraid him but simply said : ‘O nephew, what can be done now? The world is burnt, go eat whatever fruit you can find!’ But Sita, the wife of *Dharmes*, said to her husband ‘Now that the world is burnt, go and every day run over one of the seven parts into which you have divided it and see if you can find any bird or crow.’ For six days *Dharmes*, day after day, went over a new part of the world, and for six days his wife for his meals prepared only lac mixed with water. After the sixth day *Dharmes* having found nothing, declared himself helpless, caught his head between his hands, and began to sob. Then Sita told him : ‘I knew what was going to happen. That is why I entreated you not to set the world on fire, but you would not listen to me and listened to your nephew the baboon.’ Whilst the world was on fire, Sita had hidden the first man and woman (*bharya* and *bhayin*) in a fold of her garment. After that she took them out and hid them in a crab’s hole in the rushes that were growing in the Sira Sita paddy-fields of Okasi Putrungi. There, as it was the only part that had been spared by the fire, they were eating whatever they could find. On the seventh day of *Dharmes*’ wanderings Sita told him : ‘Now you have wandered over six parts of the world; you say that there are seven parts, go then to-day and see the seventh part!’ Then *Dharmes*, having put on a flowing long *dhoti*, went to hunt with a common hawk—not a *Kohi*—perched on a wand of silver and gold. He took with him also his bitch called *Lille bhuli khairi*. On that day he found unmistakable signs of man. On that day Sita had prepared for his dinner *arwa* rice and *urid dal*. When he came back, he told her : “To-day I have found unmistakable signs of man.” The next day Sita said to him, “Now, go there again to-day.” He started again, having put on his long *dhoti*, with his wand of gold and silver, on which sat a common hawk, not a *kohi*, and accompanied by his bitch *Lille bhuli khairi*. When he arrived near the rushes, *Lille bhuli khairi* began to wag her tail and *Dharmes* was ready to let fly his hawk. Suddenly the first man and woman started from a bush and in a fright began to shout : “O grandfather, O grandfather, look! Your dog is going to bite us.” *Dharmes* immediately called back his dog and said : “My grandchildren, don’t be afraid, don’t run away! I was just looking for you.” Then he wrapped both of them in his long flowing *dhoti* and went home. Sita was waiting for him on the threshold, one foot inside the house and one foot outside, with a *lota* of water in her hands. She hastened to wash his hands and feet and at once asked him : “Did you find the grandchildren? Come, come show them! Where are they?” Then

Dharmes said, "Yes, to-day I have found them. Here they are." He unfolded his *dhoti* and showed them to his wife, who at once cleaned and washed them and took them inside. On that day Sita gave a good dinner to Dharmes and prepared *arwa* rice with *rahar dal*. Then, the *bhaya bhayin* (first man and woman) asked Dharmes, "Grandfather, what work are we going to do?" He told them to go and cut wood to burn on the ground and prepare it for cultivation. At that time there was nothing like day and night, there was day the whole time.

When Dharmes went to inspect their work, he found that they had been very busy and had cut great heaps of wood. Then Dharmes, seeing the different heaps, asked them, "What day's work does this represent? On what day did you cut that?" and so on. They always answered, "To-day, to-day." Dharmes saw that this would not do and made day and night. From that time when night came they used to go home, where Dharmes gave them something to eat. At night they slept with the trunk of a tree between them, the man on one side and the woman on the other. After some days Dharmes went again to inspect their work, and seeing the different heaps of wood asked them, "What day's is this?" They answered, "To-day's." And that, "What day's is it?" They answered, "Yesterday's." Hearing this Dharmes said: "Now it is all right." Then he said: "To-day I have made a wonderful discovery for my grandchildren. I found it with the greatest difficulty." Then he gave them *hanria* or rice-beer to drink and told them how to prepare it. When they came home that evening they enquired of Dharmes: "Grandfather, now how are we going to sleep." He told them. "Put a screen of bamboo between you and sleep, the man on one side and the woman on the other." For several nights they did so, but once they put aside the screen and slept together. The next morning they went to Dharmes and told him, "O grandfather, to-night we slept together." Dharmes told them, "It is all right; you did very well." From that time man began to multiply. They went again to cut wood and prepare the ground for cultivation. When everything was ready, the rainy season came, and they went to Dharmes and said to him, "Grandfather, what are we going to sow." Dharmes gave them some seeds in a gourd. They went and sowed them, and as they were sowing, the seeds were increasing so that they were able to sow all their fields. But as the crops were growing, the rats, grasshoppers and lizards began to destroy them. Seeing this they were discouraged and were wondering what to do. Then Dharmes came and told them how to do the *Palkhansna* with the different lines made of the white flour of the yeast, the red mud of their hearths and pounded charcoal. They did so, removed the spell, and got good crops.

GENESIS OF THE BHUTS OR DEVILS.

The world devastated by fire looked like copper. The 12 brothers Asurs and the 13 brothers Lodhas were busy at their furnaces smelting iron. The smoke ascending to heaven was so thick and suffocating that Ansraj Pankraj Bhagwan's horse (*viz.*, God's horse), got sick and could not eat his corn or drink water. God sent Kerketa Jhagru (a bird resembling the hedge sparrow) and the king crow Mahru to the 12 brothers Asurs and 13 brothers Lodhas to carry his message to them. The Kerketa went first and told them, "O brothers Asurs and Lodhas, keep your furnaces going during the day

and stop work at night. God's horse Ansraj Pankraj is sick and cannot eat his corn." The 12 brothers Asurs and 13 brothers Lodhas impudently answered, "Who is he that forbids us? We won't receive any orders from anyone. We don't recognise any master. Here we are kings and subjects (*i.e.*, we are all equal). This is our own kingdom. Though we work day and night, we eat only hot melted iron, and the effects of digestion are disastrous to our clothes; and still we have to receive orders." They got in a fury and said, "Let us catch the fellow." They rushed upon him, caught him by the neck with their pincers and flattened his head on the stone used by them as an anvil, whilst his wings got reddened with iron dust. Though before that the Kerketa was white, from that time his head is flat and his wings reddish and his cry is *ket! ket! ket!* Having been treated in this way, the Kerketa returned to his master and said to him, "God, I delivered your message to the Asurs, and see how they have treated me! They replied, 'Here we are the masters. In this kingdom we are all kings and subjects; we eat only hot melted irons, &c. &c.; go, we are not afraid of anyone.' See now how they have maltreated me! They have caught me by the neck with their pincers and flattened my head on their anvil."

After this God sent the king-crow and told him, "Go and try to persuade the 12 brothers Asurs and 13 brothers Lodhas to stop; tell them that my horse Ansraj Pankraj cannot eat his corn nor drink water." The king-crow went and said to them, "Brothers Asurs and Lodhas, work during the day and stop during the night! God's horse Ansraj Pankraj is sick and cannot eat his grain." The 12 brothers Asurs and 13 brothers Lodhas got into a rage and gave him the same answer as to the Kerketa; caught him by the tail with their pincers and rolled him in black iron dust; from that time, the king-crow is black and his tail is divided into two parts. The king-crow returned to his master and told him how he had been treated and what they had said. Then God said, "I will go myself." He took the form of a man full of sores and put round his loins strips of the bark of the *Simul* tree and came down upon earth. He went first to the rich and said to them, "Oh, you that are rich will you not keep me in your house?" They answered, "Go, we won't keep you. What! If you were to remain here, our servants seeing your purulent sores would get disgusted and would not be able to digest their food. He went thus to three different houses and got the same answer. At last he went to the house of an old widow and said to her, "Mother, take pity on me and keep me in your house." The old widow answered, "Come in, my son. You can stop in my miserable hut. I have nothing to eat. I get my daily food by working for others, but I will keep you all the same." The old woman immediately washed him and anointed him with oil. The next morning, she went as usual to work and got much more than usual, just as much as she could carry; and when she poured the grain out of her basket she found that it had doubled. Then Bhagaban unhusked the paddy and for two measures of paddy got two measures of rice. This went on for several days. Then the old woman began to suspect him and said to him, "My son, do not steal the property of others. This will bring trouble. I beg of you not to do that. I get my food by working every day: let us be satisfied with that." Bhagwan full of sores answered, "Mother! don't accuse me, I never stole the property of others. I will prove it. Remain here to-day, take two measures of paddy to husk and I will do the same." They did so, and he brought in twice the amount

of rice. When she saw this the old woman exclaimed, "My son, I did not believe it, but now I see."

The paddy began to accumulate in all the corners of the old woman's house, whilst those that were rich before became poor, and from the time that Bhagwan came down to earth, the furnaces of the 12 brothers Asurs and 13 brothers Lodhas began to fall in and they could not repair them. They looked everywhere for a sorcerer to find out the *bhut* who was the cause of the misfortune; but no one succeeded. At last they assembled in council and one of them said, "We have called all the sorcerers of the world and all to no purpose; there is that man full of sores living in the house of that old widow: let us call him, perhaps he will know." Then two or three brothers went and said to him, "Brother, we have come to you on a very important matter. See! our furnaces are entirely destroyed: it may be you know the cause." Bhagwan answered, "It may be I know something about it." Then he began to pretend to look for the omens and said, "Now that will do: light your furnaces and blow." From that time everything went on all right. Some days after Bhagwan went, looked at their furnaces and asked them, "Well now, is it all right?" They answered, "Yes, everything is all right, but what sacrifice have we to offer?" Bhagwan told them that only a human sacrifice would do. They looked everywhere for a victim, but no one was willing to sacrifice himself or his children; they came to Bhagwan in despair and said to him, "What are we to do: we cannot find a victim?" Bhagwan answered, "Never mind, don't fret about it. I am alone in the world, I have no father, no mother, I am full of sores. How long am I going to rot? I am disgusted with life. Since you can find no one, I will offer up myself for you. Build a great furnace and throw me in, work the bellows for seven days and seven nights, and after that bring first water in new earthen pots, cut branches of the mangoe tree, dip them in water and extinguish the fire." They did so, opened the furnaces, and lo! Bhagwan who had gone in alone full of sores came out riding on his horse Ansraj Pankraj loaded with silver and gold. They opened their eyes wide and asked him, "Where did you find all this?" He answered: "In the furnace, of course." Then they said, "In that case, we want to go in also." Then Bhagwan said to them: "Of course you may go in also. You see how much gold and silver a poor man like me, full of sores, has brought out; how much more silver and gold will you not bring out, you who are full of health." Some of them shouted, "We will go, we will go." Bhagwan, however, said this would not do, as, if some went and others remained, there would be a great disturbance when questions of dividing the silver and gold came up. "No," said he, "listen to me: build a very great furnace in which all of you will be able to enter; and all go in." They did so, and Bhagwan called a woman that was pregnant to work the bellows, promising to give her a share of the gold and silver. They went in, and Bhagwan set fire to the furnace and told the woman to work the bellows. Immediately they all began to howl and kick, and the woman got frightened and wanted to stop, but Bhagwan said to her, "Go on, go on, they are only fighting and quarrelling about the silver and gold." The woman worked the bellows for one day and one night. Then when Bhagwan opened the furnace, they found only charred bones. Bhagwan then jumped on his horse and was ready to start, when all the Asur women came and caught the horse by the bridle and shouted, "We won't let you go. Now that our husbands are all dead,

who is going to feed us?" Then God answered, "Well, I had sent the Kerketa and the king-crow to forbid you to smelt iron, because my horse Ansraj Pankraj got sick and could not eat. You did not listen: this is why I punished you. Now I will give you the means to live. Become *bhuts* and your name will be Dehdebi and Dahadebi; and go and live among the Uraons, who will offer sacrifices to you."

Before beginning the recital of these two chapters, the *Sankatalas*, whilst he is drawing the lines, says, "See, O Dharmes, I break the teeth of the evil mouth that the grasshoppers and lizards may not eat the crops, that the fields may yield a good harvest, that the cows and calves and goats and children of.....(here he pronounces the name of the man in whose behalf he is making the *palkhansna*) may not get sick but keep in good health." At the end of the ceremony he repeats again what he said in the beginning, specifying the different castes renowned for their evil eye. "I break the teeth of the Keonts, Kumhars, Ghansis, Dhobis, Chiks, Chamārs, who either on the way to the fountain or in the village may have made use of their evil mouth, that the paddy of this man may not die or be eaten by rats, mice and lizards; that all the people of his house may not get sick but keep in good health."

Here, the *Sankatalas* makes his profession of faith and says, "I agree in all things with the *panch*. I do not know anything of witchcraft. I only utter the words that have been revealed by God. I do not know anything else, nor do I say anything else but what God has said Himself. All these words I say from the bottom of my heart. God has created the world, and we are the descendants of the Bhaya Bhayin." Having said this he cooks the egg and gives it to eat to the children, but keeps the broken shells and goes to the jungle to cut a branch of the *Keont* tree (*Diospyros tomentosa*) and one of the *Bhelwa* tree (*Sewicarpur anaocardinus*). He then makes an incision in them with a hatchet, and inserts the broken shell of the egg and plants them in the fields. The branch of *Keont* is in memory of the monkey, and branch of *Bhelwa* is to break the evil mouth and destroy the evil eye; for the oil of the *Bhelwa* tree is such that if even a drop of it falls in anyone's eye the man becomes blind; and a drop taken in the mouth produces sores.

This is done also in memory of the Kerketa and king-crow, for when they went to God to complain of the way they had been treated by the Asurs, he said to them, "Go and live among the Uraons; they will plant branches of *Keont* and *Bhelwa* in their fields; go and perch on these branches, and if any insects or grasshoppers come flying about the place, eat them up." To prevent the evil eye from doing any harm to their crops, they also put on a stick an earthen vessel painted white and black (in this way they have the three colours of the lines used in the *palkhansna*) or the skull of an animal. The evil eye will rest first on these and the crops will be safe.

The ceremony of *Neojana* is also performed to protect children from the evil eye. When the child is some weeks old, they place in his hand some mustard and cotton seeds mixed with turmeric, as much as his little hand can hold, and say, "Let the looks of any evil-eyed man go back to himself; may his eyes burst and come out of their sockets." Then they throw the seeds into the fire adding, "Let the evil eye burst like these seeds in the fire."

They have still more practices to counteract the effects of the evil eye, but this will

suffice to show how much they trouble themselves about it. Anyone can now conceive the effects of these ideas on the people of a village : everyone suspects his neighbour, many quarrels rise, and very often the life of a poor old ugly woman is quite unbearable.

WORSHIP OF BARANDA.

(*Baranda is the son of the Asur woman who was pregnant and worked the bellows when Dharmes punished the Asurs. He kept the boy and gave him his post to reward the labour of his mother.*)

As their mind never soars very high, we cannot expect to find lofty ideas in their worship. They look upon God as a big *zemindar*, who does nothing by Himself but keeps a *chapras*i [messenger] or a kind of *tahsildar* ; and they conceive the latter as having all the defects so common to his profession. The Uraons seem to be under no obligation to God except the performance of the *palkhansna* ; and Baranda exacts tribute from them mercilessly—not exactly out of zeal for the service of his master, but out of greed ; for he has to receive his *talbana*. When they suspect that a sickness is caused by Baranda, or when the *ojha* after his incantations has found him in the flickering light of his lamp, they do not proceed with him as they do with the other *bhuts*, as the *ojha* cannot exercise any power over him. But if they cannot immediately offer him the customary *puja*, they make a vow to him (*bachchia bandhna*) and ratify it in this way. They take a leaf of Sakhua, place on it *arwa* rice, turmeric and a leaden ring, and sew the leaf together and tie it up with a *sabai* string and lodge it in the roof of the house. The *Arwa* rice symbolises a sacrifice ; as no sacrifice is performed without the offering which consists in feeding the victim with *arwa* rice. The *sabai* string means a bullock, because they lead the animal to the sacrifice with a string of *sabai* grass : the leaden ring is the *dasturi* for his wife if he has any : the addition of turmeric tells Baranda that this is only a vow and not the offering itself. Baranda does not take any condiments. If, however, they had not served up turmeric, Baranda would have thought they were only fooling him by offering *arwa* rice, and inflicted condign punishment. Europeans very often do not understand the worship of those people because their ideas are always flying too high and they cannot disconnect religion from mysticism. In the worship of these savages, everything is most commonplace. Anyone knowing anything of the ways of these people will recognise at once in Baranda the *tahsildar* or any *chapras*i of the sarkar or the money-lender. Do not believe that any Uraon or any Kol has any idea of the mystical meaning of a sacrifice. They cannot conceive any being altogether immaterial ; they live themselves only for eating and drinking, and they think that the *bhuts* have to be fed. Their sacrifices therefore are simply the feeding of *bhuts*, whom they look upon as parasites. The blood of the victim is only offered to appease their hunger.

The ceremonies used in the sacrifice to Baranda are most complicated, and no one can tell the meaning of them. When the time appointed for the Puja has come, all the relatives of the man are invited. One of them leads the animal, a bullock, with a rope of *sabai*, and the votary detaches the *ex-voto* from the roof and carries it to the place reserved for offering sacrifices to Baranda. This has, meanwhile, been cleaned and besmeared with fresh cow-dung. The *Sankatalas* proceeds then as he does for the *palkhansna*, draws

his circles to represent the rainbow or God's granary, places some rice and an egg in the middle ; but this time does not use the triangle, nor the five sticks representing the *panch*. Instead of two chapters, he sings only one, *viz.*, the Genesis of the *Asurs* or *bhuts*. At the end he invokes the protection of God against Baranda and says, " O God, from to-day do not send any more your *chapras*i to punish us. You see we have paid our respects to you, and we are going to give him his *dasturi* " (" tip " or perquisite). Having said this they move a little further to offer their sacrifice to Baranda ; they feed first the bullock with *arwa* rice, which is the offering, then the votary strikes the animal slightly with a hatchet and leaves him to be killed by anyone of those that are present. The skin is immediately taken off and the *Sankatalas* chooses one piece from the ribs, one from the tongue, and three from the liver. He cuts these into small bits, which he strings on the rib of a palm-leaf. This with the rest of the liver is put in an earthen vessel on the fire to cook without any condiment. When the meat is sufficiently cooked, the *Sankatalas* takes out the strung meat and puts it in a winnowing fan, leaving the rest of the liver ; he adds then some water and rice. When he sees that the water is boiling, he again inserts the strung meat into the pot until he sees that five grains of rice are adhering to it, when he takes it out, unstrings it and lets it drop into a winnowing fan. Meanwhile someone of the crowd has prepared two cups each made of three *sal* leaves sewn together. The *Sankatalas* divides the meat into three portions which he lets fall one after the other into one of the leaf cups. This being done, he takes the other leaf cup, puts it on the first and sews them together. A shoot of a *sal* tree of the thickness of an arm is cut, and five rings are cut in it by removing the bark. This represents Baranda. The *Sankat* sticks it in the ground, places the leaf cups containing the meat close to it, and surrounds the whole with thorns. The ring of the *bachchia bandhna* is thrown inside, and, the vow being now fulfilled, they throw away the *sakhua* leaf and the *arwa* rice with the *sabai* string. Then they all shout, " *Uddu Baranda, Keter Baranda, Chakki Baranda, Dharmes ke chapras*i ! " " Now that we have paid what we owed to your master and given you your *dasturi*, leave us alone and do not come to tease us any more." *Uddu Baranda, Keter Barendra* are nicknames. They are not afraid of him any more, because they have paid their debts to his master. When this is done, they eat the rest of the liver that has remained in the cooking-pot, whilst the rice is taken out to be distributed to the people of the village. As for the meat, it is divided in this way : the votary gets the leg on which the bullock has fallen when being slaughtered ; the *panchāyat* the other leg ; the rest of the meat is distributed among the other people. When leaving the place, they put the tail of the animal round the post representing Baranda and repeat, " Now, Baranda, we leave you : you have got your *dasturi*, do not molest us any more." Then they depart, and five children who have received five special shares of meat keep on shouting—" E Baranda, E Baranda, give salt, give salt to the man who has offered you the sacrifice ! "

WORSHIP OF THE SPIRITS OF THE ASUR WOMEN WHOSE HUSBANDS WERE
DESTROYED BY DHARMES.

The Uraons look upon these not as *bhuts* but as *deotas*, and offer them sacrifices because Dharmes entrusted their feeding to them when they caught hold of the bridle of

his horse Ansaj Prakraj and would not let him go before he explained to them how they could live. These are household tutelary divinities who, however, might become troublesome if they were not properly propitiated.

The Uraons compare the *puja* offered to them to the *tajia* of the Muhammadans. The expenses to be incurred by the votaries are so great that only well-to-do people can afford to perform the rite. The others are satisfied with a vow or *bachchia bandhna*, which is formulated thus: "When we shall be able to do it, we promise you to offer the usual sacrifice." This vow is ratified by putting some *arwa* rice into a *bhanda* (small earthen pot) which they suspend from the rafters of the house with a rope of *sabai*. *Arwa* rice means a sacrifice; the rope of *sabai* means a bullock.

A day having been fixed for the *puja*, the man who is to officiate is notified eight days previously and invitations are issued to as many as possible. Not only are all the people of the village invited, but also those of the surrounding villages. On the eve of the sacrifice they assemble at the house of the votary. Before commencing the ceremonies the man officiating sticks into the roof, on either side of the house, two *chigris*, i.e., two bamboos 10 feet long used for carrying thatching grass. Hence the *puja* is called the *chigrinad puja*. By this time all the inmates of the house have come out, and an earthen vessel called *tawa* is boiling full of oil on the fire close to the entrance of the house; five cakes have been prepared with rice flour. The man officiating before entering the house, cooks these in the boiling oil and stirs the whole with his hand without (as they say) getting burned. When the cakes are cooked he distributes them to the people. This is done in the evening; and from that time till next day at 4 P.M. they keep fasting, but they are allowed to drink rice-beer, and this they do with a vengeance. Small *shami-anas* made of green branches of trees have been erected in front of the house, and through the whole night and the following day rice-beer is most liberally distributed. The man officiating in the meantime has gone inside the house accompanied by a servant, and is supplied with two big pots of rice-beer. From that time he is not allowed on any account to come out of the house till next day at 4 P.M. A light is burning in the middle of the room, and the offerer of the sacrifice sits with two combs in his hands in front of the light, combing his hair and moving his body from right to left, following the whole time the motion of the flame. This is done in remembrance of the Asur woman who worked the bellows. At about 4 P.M. the next day, the man officiating issues forth carrying the small pot with *arwa* rice that had remained hanging as an *ex-voto*. Two cocks, a white one and a black one, are carried by a boy, whilst a coolie carries two pots of rice-beer. A procession is formed by the men alone, and they march to the nearest ant-hill. A hole is bored from south to north right through it. The *bhanda* is deposited in it, and the man officiating, after feeding the cocks with *arwa* rice, sacrifices one on each side of the hole, throws their heads into the *bhanda*, closes its orifice with a lighted *chirga* and surrounds the hole with thorns and mud. The bodies of the birds are then entrusted to the boys to be duly cooked. When shutting the openings with mud, the master of ceremonies says, "Now that you have had your *dasturi*, protect us and spare us." They then partake of the meat and rice-beer. The *puja* being now considered to be over, they return home and make merry at the expense of the master of the house.

Connected with this *puja* is what they call the *chigramad bhayari*, which takes place every five or ten years. All the members of the family come together, and after the usual ceremonies a bullock is sacrificed. Its horns are thrust into the ant-hill.

THE CULT OF ANCESTORS.

In order to understand the cult of ancestors, it should be borne in mind that the Uraons believe that every man has two shades. As the shadow of a man projected on the wall is double, one very thick in front and the other very light a little behind, so a dead man has two shades, the heavy one that goes to Markha or the heaven of the Uraons, and the other one that remains among them. It will be seen by all their practices that the Uraons believe that they are always living among their ancestors, and they are convinced that they still love them, take the same interest in their affairs as before, and can help and protect them in their difficulties.

Two of their ceremonies will show their belief exactly *viz.*, the *chhain bhitrana*, which consists in calling back the shade of the departed into the house, and the *koman* or the re-uniting of the heavy shade with the shades of their ancestors.

Chhain Bhitrana.—On the day of the burial or burning of the corpse, one of the men of the village is chosen to call back the shade of the departed. In the evening he builds a diminutive hut of branches and straw not far from the burial-place, and after dark sets fire to it. As the fire is blazing he strikes together a ploughshare and a sickle, and pronouncing the name of the departed, shouts three times at the top of his voice, "O so and so, come quick, come quick: your house is burning!" Of course the shade of the deceased cannot resist such a realistic cry of alarm, and when the man thinks that he has given it time enough to reach the place, he leads the way to the old house, beating the whole time the ploughshare and the sickle.

Inside the house, with the door shut, is the nearest relative, sitting before a burning lamp with a cock in his hand ready to be sacrificed. The man with the ploughshare knocks at the door and introduces the shade of the departed, whilst the man inside hastens to sacrifice the cock and pours the blood in a corner of the house to entice the shade to take its abode there.

Now that the light shade has come to its resting-place to remain there peacefully among its old acquaintances, they have to take care of the heavy shade, which cannot be reunited to the ancestors until the ceremony of the *korman* has been performed. This takes place ten days after the burial or the burning of the corpse. During this time the heavy shade is hovering about homeless, between the old house and the burial-place. But they do not forget it; small leaf cups full of rice are deposited on the way to the burial-place to feed it during the short time of its exile. When the time appointed for the *Korman* has come, the small courtyard in front of the house of the deceased is cleaned and besmeared with cow-dung, and a round hole is dug in the middle with a ploughshare. All the people invited bring a little rice in a leaf cup and deposit it near the hole. The *Sankot*, or the man acting in the name of the *panch* of the village, makes round the hole the lines of the *palkhansna* representing the rainbow; inside he puts some

rice and an egg, and, this time without singing the two legends, directly invokes God, saying, "This man (naming him) has been living among us : now he is gone : see that everything be right for him." The egg is then cooked and given to the children to eat, whilst the shell is put in the hole. A small pig is then brought and beaten to death by sticks, and its blood is also dropped in the hole. The *Sankot* alone then pours all the rice brought on a mat, and throws the leaf cups also in the hole and shuts it up. This is a sacrifice offered to Nasre, namely, the personification of the *panch* of the other world. They invoke him saying, "Deign to accept this man among you : he is one of your children ; receive him as such and have pity on us also that remain behind." The rice brought is cooked, and everyone eats of it.

The ceremony of *harbona* or *koha-benja* is a sequel to this. The Uraons are not satisfied with the reunion of the shades, but they want also the reunion of the bones. This they call *koha-benga* or the Great Marriage. Those who die before the seeds have sprouted in the field are burnt ; and the few charred bones which are not reduced to ashes are gathered in an earthen pot. Over the bones relatives put some rice, native gin, and money ; then they take this urn to the river which holds the bones of their ancestors. The Bhuniyars (first settlers and proprietors of their fields) have a particular spot (called *Kundi*) in the river where they deposit the bones of all the members of the family, and if they have been expelled, as is often the case, or obliged to leave their village and their fields, they will nevertheless bury the bones of their dead in the ancient *Kundi*. But the bones of all those who die after the seeds have sprung up and before the end of the harvest, may not be taken to the river, as it is believed that the crops would suffer if this were done. The bones are therefore put away in a pot under a stone near the house till the harvest is over. Then on the *Koha-benja* day (in January) they are all gathered. After the banquet given in honour of the dead, the men and women form a procession to accompany the bones to their last resting-place. Before going to the river they make a tour of the village, and the bones of each departed are brought for the last time before the house he inhabited. The relatives pour some rice and native gin into the urn and tie some sweetmeats which are prepared for the occasion around it. Then the procession starts for the river, the men and women giving vent to their grief in dancing, singing, beating drums and weeping, while the earthen pots containing the bones are passed from hand to hand and are made to take a part, as it were, in the dancing. While yet at some distance from the spot, those who bear the urns run forward and bury them in the sand in the bed of the river. The rest having arrived, they all take a bath and the Great Marriage is over.

As has been said before, the *panch* of the heavy shades, namely the ancestors gone to Markha, is personified by Nasre, whilst the light shades that remain with their relatives are personified by Pachbal. Besides the *puja* offered to him on the *Korman* day, two other sacrifices of fowls of special colours are offered to Nasre every year in every house. It is remarkable that, in offering sacrifices to their ancestors, they do not use *arwa* but common rice, and they kill the bird by putting the head in the ground and hitting it with their fist. Most probably this custom dated from the time when *arwa* rice and knives were unknown among the Uraons.

The great feast of the *Pachbal* is the *Naya* or the eating of the new rice. This is a day of rejoicing among the Uraons, who generally have been fasting for several months. Sweetmeats in profusion are prepared for the children, and it is certainly the best day of the year for them. It is touching to see the old people remember those days with gratitude to their old departed parents. As they were fed so liberally on that day by their now departed parents when they were helpless, so they now in their turn want to feed them (namely the *Pachbal*) by offering them sacrifices; and no one will partake of the new rice before the *firmitica* are offered to the ancestors. A handful of it is made into *chura* and spread on the ground. A *hanria*, or pot of rice-beer, is prepared, and before anyone drinks of it some is spilt on the ground, and everyone afterwards dips his fingers in his cup and lets fall some drops also in honour of their ancestors. A fowl, neither white, nor red, nor black, but whity grey, is offered in the old way, namely crushing the head with the fist. The eldest of the family then says, "O old mothers and fathers, you have always been so good to us on these days. Here we are rejoicing: we cannot forget you: come and rejoice with us."

They invoke their ancestors—

1. When they give a name to a newborn child. They always choose the name of an ancestor with much ceremony, which will be described afterwards. When the name is chosen they invoke him, put the child under his protection and say, "See, now this child has taken your name, protect him."

2. In time of sickness or difficulties they have recourse to them and say, "You have left us your children; you see in what difficulties we are; help us and do not forget us, for we do not forget you and always give you your *dasturi*," meaning the sacrifice. Generally they promise to give them a fowl if they are helped.

3. At the time of marriage twice—when the fathers of the bride and bridegroom join arms and when they drink two pots of rice-beer in their honour and spill some on the ground and say: "Now we have married this couple: you, their ancestors, help them and protect them."

4. At the time of the *koman* as it has been described. To be recognized and admitted into the other world by their forefathers, boys burn five spots on their arms. This is very painful, and to help them to be courageous the others say: "Look at the burial place; there are your ancestors; if you are not courageous they will not receive you." The girls also for the same reason have three vertical lines tattoed on their forehead and three smaller ones on each of their temples with a little spot on the hollow of the nose and the chin.

When they build a new house the ancestors are invited to go to it, and a sacrifice is always offered to them the first day the house is occupied. Their devotion to the *Panch-bal* goes so far that many of them will never drink rice-beer without letting some drops fall on the ground for their benefit. The teachings of the *Panch* represented by the *Sankatalas* also being now exhausted, let us come now to the religious practices which are common to the Uraons and all the other tribes of Chota Nagpur, namely, the teachings of the *Pahan* or village priest and of the *Ojha* or Exorcist. It is almost certain that the Uraons before their arrival in Chota Nagpur knew and practised only what has been explained before, and had neither *Pahan* nor *Ojha*.

This is proved :—

1. By the unanimous testimony of the best informed among the tribe.
2. By the scrupulous use of their language in the preceding ceremonies, whilst they use Hindi or rather the Sadari *lingua franca* of Chota Nagpur in all the other ceremonies.
3. By their choice of *Pahan* or *Baiga*.

In villages where there are people of Kolarian origin and Uraons living together, a man of Kolarian origin will always be *Pahan*, and everywhere they will try to entice a *Kol* to remain in their village to do the office. It is only when they cannot help it that they choose a man of their tribe.

In order to understand the whole system it is necessary to have an idea of the organisation of the invisible world of parasites in which the Uraons are living.

There are household *bhuts*, sept *bhuts*, village *bhuts*, village *devtas*, wandering *bhuts*, common *devtas*.

The household *bhuts* of the Uraons are *Baranda*, *Chigrinod*, *Panchbal* and *Nasre*.

The sept *bhut* is *Khunt Nasan*. With the household *bhuts* and with the sept *bhuts* the *pahan* or priest has nothing to do.

The village *bhuts* are *Khunt*, *Bhula*, *Churil*. These are generic names which will be explained afterwards.

The village *devtas* are (a) *Pat*, with his *chaprasi* or *chaukidar*, *Duharia*, and (b) *Chala Pacho*, or *Sarna burhia* or the lady of the grove, with her faithful attendant and *dame d'honneur*, *Deswali*.

The *pahan* or priest, acting always in behalf of the community, is in charge especially of the village *devtas*, and through them of the village *bhuts*.

To the village *devtas* should be added *Mahadeo* and *Parbati* his wife, but these are specially worshipped by people of Kolarian origin—the Uraons have no devotion for them.

The common *devtas* are *Dhartimai* (the earth) and *Surajmai* or *Bhagawan* (the sun). It should be noticed *en passant* that the earth is considered both as a *devta* and as a *bhut*, *Dhartimai*—tutelary divinity, *Dharti nasan*—mischievous *bhut*.

The authority of the village priest or *pahan*, as has been said, extends over the village *devtas* and village *bhuts*, whilst the *Ojha*, *Mati* or *Dewair* has to deal with all the mischievous *bhuts* who are the cause of all kinds of sicknesses, and even with some *devtas* and village *bhuts* who might punish the people, because they have been slighted by them or because they have neglected their duties to them.

Let us now examine the *pahan* or village priest—his office, his teachings and functions. The office of *pahan* is hereditary, but if the *pahan* dies without male issue or if he is converted to Christianity, a new *pahan* has to be elected—supernaturally elected. There are different ways of ascertaining the will of the gods. The three principal are these :—

(1) A round stone used to grind curry is thrown at random all about the village. When it stops exactly before the door of a house the master of that house is elected.

(2) A winnowing fan is introduced into a cleft bamboo so that it can move about in every direction. All the eligible people are assembled, and the winnowing fan is pushed forward in front of them. The man towards whom the winnowing fan turns will be elected.

(3) All the eligible men being assembled, as many clods of earth as there are men, are placed in the middle, each clod of earth representing one of the men present. A child is called, and a curry-stone is put in his hand. It is said that the curry-stone will drag the child to the clod of earth representing the man who has to be elected.

The *pahan* teaches that—

Pat is the master of all the village *bhuts* who are immediately under his control. He is a great friend of the *pahan* who through him has great authority over the *bhuts*. He lives on a hill close by from which he can see all that is going on in the village. He is a good *devta* and does not allow the *bhuts* to cause too much disturbance in the village. If *Pat* was not there to forbid them, the *bhuts* would upset everything and kill everyone.

Pat being in authority, must have a *chaprassi*, and he has one: his name is *Duharia*. He lives in the boundaries of the village and is always on the watch for the village *bhuts*, his office being exactly the same as that of the village *chowkidar*. Every day he has to consult with *Pat* and report what is going on among the *bhuts*.

Chola Pacho or the Lady of the grove lives in the *sarna* or sacred grove. She has nothing to do with the *bhuts*. She is credited with the power of giving rain and consequently good crops. She is the shade of the old woman who received *Dharmes* and washed his wounds when he came down on earth to punish the *Asuks*. *Deswali* is the faithful dame d'honneur of the Lady of the grove.

All the *devtas* have a proper place assigned to them in the village, and are represented by a stone marked with *Sendur*.

These are the shades of the *Asurs* who were punished by the *Bhagwan*. They are separated from their first wives, but they have married *Bhula* wives.

There are also two other *devtas*, viz., *Chandi* the goddess of hunting and *Gaurea* the tutelary divinity for cattle. Though they do not belong to the *Pahan* exclusively, they may be introduced now; their worship will be explained afterwards. *Khunt* is the generic name for all the *bhuts* that have taken their habitat in the village, and are, as it were, the first settlers or *bhuniyars* of the place. They seem to have the same organisation as that of a band of banditti. They belong to both sexes. Their leaders are *Darha* and *Dakhin* his wife. Just as all booty goes first to the leaders, so no sacrifice is offered to the other *bhuts* without the knowledge or participation of *Darha* and *Dakhin*. *Khunt* would be better known under the name of *Darha & Co.* *Darha & Co.* are like *darogas* and constables. When they receive bribes they go shares, but the *daroga's* is always the lion's share. *Darha's* band is billeted in the village, some living in caves, some in fields, others in trees, others in ravines. There is not a queer-looking place which has not its *bhut* or *bhuts*. Some of them live like hermits; here and there you have a mother with her daughter, and so on. The *Baiga* and the *Ojha* have to know all by name and to be familiar with each one. In every village they are known by different names, but their chief is always *Darha*, and they are all *Khunt* or *Khunta*. *Churil* means the shades of all the women of the village who have died in pregnancy and have been buried within the boundaries of the village. They always remain near their burial-place, and the people take great care that they should not roam about the village. When, therefore, a woman dies whilst pregnant or in childbirth, or as long as the navel string has not fallen, she is held

to become a *bhut*. No one can imagine the state of consternation in which the relatives of the poor woman are when she dies in such a state.

No greater misfortune could have befallen them. They firmly believe the poor woman has become a mischievous *bhut*. She will now hover over her burial-place and be an object of horror and fright to everyone passing by. It is her nature to look out for a companion, and she is said always to choose that member of the family whom she liked best during her lifetime. She will then come at night and embrace him and tickle him under the arms, making him laugh till he dies. This is too much of a good thing, and the *Uraons* do not appreciate being subjected to such extravagant tokens of affection. To prevent her therefore from coming back they carry her body as far away as they can, but no woman will accompany her to her last resting-place lest similar misfortune should happen to her. Arrived at the burial-place, they break the feet above the ankle, twist them round bringing the heels in front, and then drive long thorns into them. They bury her very deep with her face downwards, and with her they bury the bones of a donkey and pronounce the *anathema*, "If you come home may you turn into a donkey": the roots of a palm-tree are also buried with her, and they say, "May you come home only when the leaves of the palm-tree wither," and when they retire they spread mustard seeds all along the road saying, "When you try to come home pick up all these." They then feel pretty safe at home from her nocturnal visits, but woe to the man who passes at night near the place where she has been buried. She will pounce upon him, twist his neck and leave him senseless on the ground, until brought to by the incantations of a sorcerer. Pregnant women are always in a mortal fright when they hear someone speak of a *Churil*. The husband of a woman who has become a *Churil* would never dare to think of getting married again until he has offered a sacrifice to appease the *bhut*.

When *Churil* has been the cause of some mischief and appears in the flame of the *Ojha's* lamp, her face looks somewhat like *Dakhin's*, but her feet are distorted: she is hunchbacked and has a big hole in her belly like the hollow of a rotten tree. To appease her the *Ojha* offers a white fowl. He breaks first the right wing, then the left leg; part of the head is skinned, and the tongue is drawn out of the beak and cut with a knife. After mutilating the poor bird in this way he throws it on the ground and forces it to eat some *harwa* rice saying, "You scoundrel, you are not a fowl but the daughter of a *bhut*." He then cuts its throat, and the sacrifice is over.

Bhula, namely the wanderer, is also the generic name of a class of *bhut* which are subdivided into three chief species: the *Pāsal Muan* or the shades of all those that have been murdered; the *Tāngal Muan* or the shades of those that have been hanged; and the *Bāghaut* or those that have been killed by a tiger. In fact *Bhula* means the shades of all those that have died an unnatural death. They all keep the scars of their respective wounds, and one can imagine what a weird-looking lot they are. They are always on the move, and are, as it were, the mendicant portion of the invisible community. They are not very powerful, and are responsible only for small ailments like nightmares, comas and small indispositions. When an *Ojha* has discovered him in the light of his lamp he shows a disappointed face and says: "Pshaw, only *Bhula*!" No sacrifice is offered to him,

but the *Ojha* there and then takes a few grains of rice, rubs them in charcoal and throws them at the flame of his lamp saying, "Take this, *Bhula*, and go away."

Balsadhak looks like a still-born child. This is a favourite of the *Ojhas*, as he is the *bhut* which produces hallucinations and trances. He has the power of shutting up the eyes of the people and making them believe all that the *Ojha* says is true. A full-fledged *Ojha* must have in his house the navel of a still-born child, on which he pours milk every month. If he is faithful to this practice he will get many clients, the people will have great confidence in him, and he can quickly discover the *bhuts*.

Murkuri is the thumping *bhut*. Europeans to show their kindness and familiarity thump people on the back. If this is followed by fever or any kind of sickness it will be ascribed to the passing of *Murkuri* from the body of the European into the body of the native.

Chordewa is a witch rather than a *bhut*. It is believed that some women have the power to change their soul into a black cat, who then goes about in the houses where there are sick people. Such a cat has a peculiar way of mewing quite different from its brethren, and is easily recognised. It steals quietly into the house, licks the lips of the sick man and eats of the food that has been prepared for him. The sick man soon gets worse and dies. They say it is very difficult to catch the cat, as it has all the nimbleness of its nature and the cleverness of a *bhut*. However, they sometimes succeed, and then something wonderful happens. The woman out of whom the cat has come remains insensible, as it were in a state of temporary death, until the cat re-enters her body. Any wound inflicted on the cat will be inflicted on her; if they cut its ears or break its legs or put out its eyes the woman will suffer the same mutilation. The Uraons say that formerly they used to burn any woman that was suspected to be a *Chordewa*. Such a woman sometimes also roams about at night in the form of a dwarf carrying a small basket, in which she steals paddy, and people believe that when she comes home and pours out the contents, she finds that she has stolen a big heap. People who watch at night near the threshing-floor are always in a mortal fright of a *Chordewa*.

There is also *Anna Kuari* or *Mahadhani*, who is in our estimation the most cruel and repulsive deity of all, as she requires human sacrifice. Those savage people who put good crops above everything, look upon her in a different light. She can give good crops and make a man rich, and this covers a multitude of sins. People may be sceptical about it and say that it is impossible that in any part of India under the British Government there should still be human sacrifices. Well, in spite of all the vigilance of the authorities, there are still human sacrifices in Chota Nagpur. As the vigilance of the authorities increases so also does the carefulness of the *Urkas* or *Otongas* increase. They choose for their victims poor waifs or strangers whose disappearance no one will notice. April and May are the months in which *Urkas* are at work. *Doisa*, *Panari*, *Kukra* and *Sirguja* have got a very bad reputation. During these two months no strangers will go about the country alone, and during that time nowhere will boys and girls be allowed to go to the jungle and graze the cattle for fear of the *Urkas*. When an *Urka* has found a victim he cuts his throat and carries away the upper part of the ring finger and the nose. *Anna Kuari* finds votaries not only among the Uraons but especially among the big

Zemindars and Rajas of the Native States. When a man has offered a sacrifice to *Anna Kuari* she goes and lives in his house in the form of a small child. From that time his fields yield double harvest. When he brings in his paddy he takes *Anna Kuari*, rolls her over the heap to double its size. But she soon becomes restless and is only pacified by new human sacrifices. At last after some years she cannot bear remaining in the same house any more, and kills everyone.

Khunt Nasan is the sept *bhut*. He is simply the personification or rather the deification of Death, which is personified to the European mind in the shape of a skeleton with a scythe in its hands. These people imagine that it is the sept *bhut* which they have never been able to tame, and which has carried off all the members of that sept. After all, all these *bhuts* and *devtas* are only deifications of good and evil. The difference between us and these people is that we personify and they deify. Personification implies no duty, whilst deification implies the duty of worship. Every year a sacrifice is offered to *Khunt Nasan* consisting of three fowls—one black, one brown, and a cock black and red. The eldest member of each family has to offer him a buffalo as a sacrifice, at which all the members of the family have to be present.

Dain.—It is difficult to give a direct definition of this *bhut*. Originally there were twenty-one *bhuts*; a mother and her twenty daughters who, by the strength of their *mantras*, could cause anyone they wished to become possessed of any particular *bhut* they desired. They are the most powerful among *bhuts*, and no one can resist them; they are the incarnation of mischief. Even *Pāt*, the tutelary divinity, who forbids the *bhuts* to do mischief, cannot resist their *mantras*, and becomes mischievous under their influence. He becomes like a man intoxicated and forgets himself and his duties.

Here is the story that will give a clear idea who these *Dains* are, and how they got their tremendous power. It will also show at the same time what the relative status of the *Ojhas* is. In the beginning Mahadeo had taught a man all the *mantras* and medicines, whereby he became almost all powerful. He then set up a school to teach others. At first, numbers of people flocked to him and were very eager to learn, but after some time, seeing the difficulty of mastering all the *mantras*, they one by one dropped out and left the school. Two of them, however, persevered, and their perseverance was rewarded by a fair knowledge and consequent power. One day, after working very hard in the fields, they were coming home with their plough on their shoulder, Mahadeo appeared to them under the form of a *jogi* and began to talk amicably with them saying: "Poor fellows! you have been working very hard and it is so hot. Are you not thirsty? You should take some rest: come, let us sit down in the shade of this mango-tree." They put down their ploughs, stuck them against the trunk of the tree and sat down. Mahadeo looked very kind and most interested in the two young men. "Well," said he, "I am very glad to hear that you are the only two young men who have persevered in the school of the *guru*. I congratulate you. By this time you must know a good number of *mantras* and be powerful." The two disciples who had been taught by their *guru* to be very discreet and prudent, did not give way at first to Mahadeo's flattery, but answered—"Indeed, we have been studying, but we know very little as yet and can do nothing." "Come, come," said Mahadeo, "don't be so humble, show what you can do."

See if you are as powerful as I am"; and muttering some *mantras* he uprooted the mango-tree and whirled it round their head with one hand as if it had been only a small twig, and then put it back in its place. The disciples seeing that he could not resist the promptings of vanity and muttering some *mantras* in their turn: they picked up some loose earth and threw it on the tree: instantly the leaves withered and died. Then pronouncing some other *mantras* they threw again some mud at the tree and the leaves instantly became green as they were before. This yielding to vanity was the seal of the doom of the human race. Had they been able to resist the temptation and stick to their first assertion, that they knew nothing, Mahadeo would have left their *guru* alive and they would have been able to learn all his *mantras*, and men would have been immortal. As it was, Mahadeo saw that he had made a mistake in divulging his secrets. "Well," said he to himself, "if this goes on, men will be as powerful as I am and will learn the secret of immortality." He at once resolved to get rid of the *guru*. Accordingly he had him bitten by a cobra. As soon as the man felt the poison taking effect he called his two disciples and told them to go quickly and fetch the medicines of immortality. They ran and again met Mahadeo, who stopped them on their way and asked them where they were running. They told him: "Our *guru* has been bitten by a snake, and we go to fetch medicine for him. "Useless," said Mahadeo, "it is too late; he is dead." The disciples suspecting nothing ran back to see the body of their beloved *guru*. He was not dead as yet, but it was too late to return and fetch the medicine. They told him what had happened, and the *guru* said: "I see that Mahadeo wants me to die: never mind, let me be, but when I am dead, carry my body to the riverside and eat first my liver, and then my whole body. In doing so you will get possession of all my *mantras*." Saying this he died. The disciples carried the body to the riverside, opened it first, and taking out the liver wrapped it in *Sakhua* leaves and put it close by. As they were cutting up the body Mahadeo arrived and upbraided them: "You villians," said he, "what are you doing? Shame! Is that the way to treat your *guru*; what an idea! What a sin to eat the flesh of your *guru*. Don't, burn it at once and throw everything into the river." They did so, and got the smoke and steam into their mouths. In their hurry they picked up everything that was on the ground and threw it into the river. The liver wrapped up in the *sakhua* leaves remained floating, and finally arrived at the mouth of the Ganges. There lived a mother with her twenty daughters: they were playing in a boat when the youngest of all saw the leaves of *Sakhua* with the liver floating close by; immediately she threw herself in the water, caught the small bundle and hid it in the folds of her *sari*. All the others surrounded her at once and wanted to know what it was, but she would not answer. A struggle ensued, and the eldest caught hold of her arms whilst another snatched the liver from her. They then all ate of it, and so got possession of nearly all the *mantras* of the *guru*. Had the disciples been able to eat the liver and the body they would have been even more powerful than the *Dains*. As it was, they swallowed only smoke and steam, that is why their *mantras* are weak and they have to work the whole night to subdue a *bhut*. These two disciples taught the *Ojhas*.

As for the *Dain Bisahis*, namely the women who by their *mantras* communicate with the *Dains*, there is a great mystery about them. The Uraons cannot understand how a

woman can acquire such a power, *viz.*, the power of commanding *bhuts*. Something, however, leaked out as to how it is done, and here is what is known. When a would-be *Dain Bisahi* wishes to learn, she strips off all her clothes and puts them near her *Akhara* or dancing place. She then puts on a *peridzoma* made with broken sticks of an old broom and goes to a cave which is the resort of *Dains*. There she makes a hole in the ground. As the boys and girls are dancing, she is learning the *mantras*, and before leaving puts a small pebble in the hole. Her education can only last one year; if at the end of that time the hole is filled to the top with pebbles it is a sign that she has learnt everything. She then has the power to take away life and restore it. Otherwise, if she has only succeeded in partially filling the hole, she can only take away life. Every year the *Dain Bisahi* has to sacrifice a black cat, the blood of which is poured in the hole she made before learning. Now to understand well what a *Dain Bisahi* is, and what rôle she plays in a village, it is necessary to know that *bhuts* do not leave their habitat or attack people before being put up to it by a *Dain* or a *Dain Bisahi*. As the people believe that every sickness is due to a *bhut*, and the *bhuts* except *Bhula* do not leave their dwelling-places without the intervention of a *Dain*, it can be imagined what an amount of suspicion is rife in every village. In every village there is certainly one and very often several *Dain Bisahis*. There is not the smallest ailment that is not attributed to them. More especially on the death of a child does the mother become beside herself with rage and madly attacks any of the women that are suspected to be *Dain Bisahis*. They go straight to the suspected *Dain Bisahi* and tell her that she has "eaten" their child, as they graphically term it. There will be a tremendous row, and the people will always take the part of the bereft mother. One can well imagine what a miserable life the women suspected of being *Dain Bisahis* lead. They are generally old, ugly-looking women with a bad character which such scenes are not calculated to improve. It is not to be wondered at if the poor creatures take their revenge in hating everyone and living up to their character, and take a certain pleasure in seeing the fear a threat to "eat" her tormentors or their children will produce.

Now that we have got a sufficient knowledge of the invisible world and of its organisation, let us come to the functions of the *baiga* or *pahan*, and afterwards to those of the *ojha*.

The *pahan* or *baiga* has to officiate at the three great feasts of the year, namely, the *sarhul*, the *kadleta*, and the *kanhiari*.

The feast of *sarhul* takes place in May when the *sal* tree is in flower. To Uraons the feast is known as *khaddi*, namely the flower of the *sal* tree. The object of this feast is to celebrate the mystical marriage of the Sun-god (*Bhagawan*) with the Goddess-earth (*Dharti-mai*), to induce them to be fruitful and give good crops. At the same time all other *bhuts* of the village are propitiated, so that they may not frustrate the efforts of the Sun God and Goddess Earth. This is the greatest feast of all.

On the eve of the appointed day no one is allowed to plough his fields, and the *baiga*, accompanied by some people of the village, goes near the *sarna* or the sacred grove. He sounds the drum and invites all his invisible clients to the great feast that will take place the next day, promising to give them a good treat. The next morning, even before

cock-crow, the *pan-bhara* steals out of his house, and, as stealthily as he can, he goes to the *sarna dari* or sacred fountain to fetch water in a new *gagri* or earthen pot. This water contains all kinds of blessings for the crops. The *pahan* has prepared for it a place in the middle of his house surrounded by cotton threads of different colours. There it remains the whole day. The water is so sacred that it would be spoiled if any eye rested on it before it reached the *baiga's* house. The *pan-bhara* and the *pujar* in the morning go from house to house to collect the victims for the sacrifice. In the afternoon, at about two o'clock, all the people are invited to be present at the *sarna*, not only Uraons and Kols but even Hindus.

[The sacred fountain contains the rain *pāni*. In that fountain there is a collection of all the produce of the country—rice, pulse, oilseeds, etc. etc., contained in small earthen pots, hollow bamboos, *sakhua* leaves, etc. This has been there from time immemorial, placed there by the first *baiga* of the village. If any of these seeds is taken away it is looked upon as a great curse and the crops are sure to fail. But to every evil there is remedy, and they have the means to find the lost seeds again by the *gaon-sagi*, a strange ceremony which will be described afterwards.]

Before beginning the *puja* the *baiga* puts on the sacred string of the *brahmans*. Then the *pan-bhara* brings him two victims—a white cock for the Sun-god (*Bhagwan*) and a black hen for *Dharti-mai* or the Earth-goddess. As the feast is the celebration of the marriage of these two, the binding ceremony of marriage is performed on these two victims. The white cock is first marked with *sindur* and then the black fowl. The earth is also marked with *sindur* at the place where the *puja* is to be offered. The victims having then been fed with *harwa* rice are sacrificed. After this follows the sacrifice of a red cock or a black goat to *Pāt*. Then to *Chala Pacho*, *Anna Kuari*, *Mahadeo*, *Duharai*, *Deswali*. The other fowls are then sacrificed by the *pujar* to all the *khunt bhuts* of the village, giving one to each of them, if there are enough, or one for two or three of them. *Dharti-Nasan* and *Bhagat*, being considered as very mischievous *bhuts*, get their sacrifice from the hands of the *ojha*.

The bodies of the victims are collected by the boys of the village who cook them on the spot. All the heads go to the sacrificers. Meanwhile the *pan-bhara* has collected flowers of the *sal*-tree around the place of sacrifice, and fetched the *rais-pani* or blessing water from the house of the *baiga*. A procession is then formed and the *pahan* is carried in triumph to his house. There his wife is watching for him, and they go through the ceremony of marriage applying *sindur* to each other—this again to symbolise the mystical marriage of the Sun-god with the Earth-goddess. By this time all the women of the village are standing on the threshold of their houses, each with a winnowing fan containing two leaf cups—one empty to receive the blessing water, the other with rice-beer for the *baiga*. His reverence stops at each house, distributes flowers and blessing water (this water is sprinkled on the seeds that have been kept for the new year), showers blessings on every house saying, "May your rooms and granary be filled with paddy, that the *baiga's* name may be great." He does not forget his rice-beer, so that one can well imagine the state he is in when he arrives at the end of the village. By that time everyone has taken copious libations of rice-beer, and all the devils of the village seem to be

let loose, and there follows a scene of debauchery baffling description—all these to induce the Sun and the Earth to be fruitful.

Kadletta is not a very great feast, though fowls are offered to all the *deotas* by the *baiga*. The headmen of the village assist at the *puja* and carry away the bodies of the victims to be distributed among the villagers, whilst the *pahan* gets only the heads for his share. From this time (in June) up to the feast of *kanihari*, which takes place in November, the *baigan* or *baiga's* wife is not allowed to eat anything that has not been prepared by herself or to drink any water that she has not fetched herself. This is done to prevent wild animals destroying crops. On that day *Darha* and the other deities are not forgotten; for five fowls are offered to them by the *pujar*.

Kanihari.—This is a feast previous to the threshing of the paddy. No one is allowed to prepare his threshing-floor before the *baiga* has gone through the ceremony. On the appointed day all the people of the village assemble with the Zemindar at their head. Plenty of offerings for sacrifice are brought. The *pahan* selects a small place near the biggest threshing-floor, clears it and besmears it with diluted cow-dung. When it is dry he makes a rectangle with flour that has been prepared from the new rice, and divides it into five parts. In each of these parts a fowl is sacrificed by the *baiga* himself and the blood spilt on the blades of the new rice that have been brought by everyone. A young black pig is offered to *Chala Pacho* and a he-goat to *Pat*. *Darha* and the other deities are not forgotten, and get fowls sacrificed to them by the *pujar*. A Tuesday is the only day on which this feast can be held. On that day the Zemindar alone is permitted to prepare his threshing-floor and thresh a few sheaves. In the evening there is a common meal at which the *baiga* presides, and this being over they go to the place where Mahadeo is worshipped and the *baiga* pours milk on the stone that represents him. From that time the people begin to dance in front of the *pahan's* house. Plenty of rice-beer is brought, and a scene of debauchery takes place in which all restraint is put aside. They sing the most obscene songs and give vent to all their passions. On that day no one is responsible for any breach of morality. But this is nothing compared to what takes place every ten years when the *baiga* marries Mahadeo to *Chala Pacho*. On that year, milk is not put on the Mahadeo stone, but leaves of the *sal* tree are sown together and put close to the stone by the *pahan*. This is to induce Mahadeo to signify his consent to the marriage by depositing on these leaves clay enough for two small statues. Of course it behoves the great deity to show some reluctance, and in years that there is abundance of rice to make beer he keeps his votaries in suspense for five or six days. During that time the *baiga* is fasting but the people are not, and in order to entice Mahadeo to give his consent full liberty is given to the boys and girls to enjoy their passions. They spend the whole night in dancing and revelry. At last the *baiga* comes bearing triumphantly the leaves with the mud that *Mahadeo* has vouchsafed to supply. With that mud he makes two small statues representing *Mahadeo* and *Chala Pacho*, clothes them with yellow clothes and then marks them with *sindur*. He starts then for a tour round the village accompanied by the people dancing and singing as at a marriage-feast. He halts at the richest houses, exhibits his two statues, marks them again with *sindur*, and prays to *Mahadeo* and *Chala Pacho* that they should themselves be very liberal to the masters of the house.

Of course, the people are very pleased, and he gets lots of paddy for his reward. He then goes back to his house always accompanied by a crowd of drunken dancers. There they spend the last night of debauchery. The next morning the *baiga* throws the two statues into the river, and the feast is over.

Bhut Bhitrana.—Some people in despair at remaining always poor take upon themselves the risk of having a *bhut* as their guest. This is arranged by the *pahan*, but he always admonishes the people that it is at their own risk and that he is not responsible for what may happen. The *baiga* then accompanied by the man goes to the habitat of one of the *khunt bhuts* of the villages. A fowl is brought and fed with *arwa* rice but not sacrificed. Then the *baiga* explains to the *bhut* that the man wants to become rich and that he invites him to live in his house. The consent of the *bhut* is presumed, and he goes to the house of the man where the *baiga* sacrifices the fowl. Some *arwa* rice, some *sindur*, and the blood of the victim are then deposited in a small earthen vessel and hung to the rafters of the house. There the *bhut* will remain. But he is a very dangerous guest, and from that time the people of the house have to be very careful not to displease him, and must try to pacify him by frequent sacrifices. They say that from that day the man becomes prosperous, but not for long, as all the people of the house are carried off one by one and killed by the *bhut* who is ever restless in his new abode.

THE OJHA (MATI, DEWAIR).

The office of the *Ojha* consists :—

First.—In finding out which *bhut* is the cause of a sickness and telling by what sacrifices he can be appeased.

Second.—In subduing *bhuts* and ejecting them from bodies and houses.

Third.—In finding out the *dain bisahi* or *vice-dain* who by her *mantras* has launched the *bhuts*.

Fourth.—In finding out the *bhuts* who are the cause of an epidemic and explaining the means of getting rid of them.

Fifth.—In finding out the *bhut* or *bhuts* who have stolen the blessing, giving seed pots from the sacred fountain.

Hence the different practices of—

1. *Ghosna*.
2. *Niksari*.
3. *Kanspandi*.
4. *Gaon banawri*.
5. *Gaon saji*.

The *ojha* has to learn for a long time, and has to pass an examination before he gets his degree. There are regular schools in nearly every village. The *guru* or teacher is either a *Lohar* or a *bhuniyar* and sometimes a *Turi*. At first nearly all the young men of the village want to learn the trade, but soon the numbers dwindle away, as they see the difficulty of mastering all the *Mantras* and incantations, so that only the cleverest and most persevering among them can become *ojhas*. Every evening they spend three, four

and sometimes five hours in learning the *mantras* and the names of the *deotas* and the *bhuts*. The *guru* is generally a renowned *ojha*—a man with a strong imagination and the gift of the gab, who gives fearful descriptions of the *bhuts* and their doings, until the heads of his pupils are stuffed with all kinds of weird-looking imaginary beings. They are taught how to work themselves into a trance, and some having more (*gun*) disposition to hypnosis than others, can pass their examination after one year, whilst others have to learn for two or three years. Of course they do not know the mysteries of hypnotism and attribute everything to *deotas* and *bhuts*. When a pupil is ready to pass his examination he has to recite all the *mantras* and incantations, give the names of all the *deotas* and *bhuts* and *gurus*, and perform all the duties of the *ojha*. When the candidate has done well he brings a fowl to sacrifice to the *deota* whom he has chosen for his special patron. Everyone is at liberty to choose the *deota* he likes the best. From that time he has to propitiate him by frequent sacrifices. The fowl that the successful candidate has brought is then sacrificed in honour of his patron, and the *guru*, dipping his finger in the blood of the offering, marks with it a big line on the forehead of the future *ojha*. From that time he can begin to practice. When a man gets ill an *ojha* is called in to ascertain which *bhut* is the cause of illness. He comes in the evening with his winnowing fan and a handful of rice. He first examines the patient, feels his pulse, and gives him some medicine. Then he squats cross-legged on the ground. On his lap he has the winnowing fan with some rice in it, and close at hand an unlit lamp. His left hand holds the end of the winnowing fan and with his right hand he stirs the rice, turning it round and round as if to mix it up well; he shuts his eyes, throws back his head, and, in a low nasal voice, invokes all the *deotas* of the world, beginning with the *deota* of the district in which he lives; then the *deotas* presiding over the destinies of the south, north-east and west; then those of all the surrounding districts and of all the chief towns of India. He invokes even the *deotas* of Europe, and it is rather interesting to learn from these people that we are under the protection of a goddess named *Baghwa*—*Belait ka Baghwa*. In all 35 *deotas* are invoked; that they may watch the *bhuts*, bring them bound and secured like thieves to the *ojha*; that he may make them shake and tremble like the billows of an angry sea. After this comes an invocation to all the renowned *gurus* of India with their patron *deotas*, more than 50 in number. Then follow *mantras* and incantations without end. A man must have a marvellous memory to learn all this by heart. All this time there is profound silence in the house, and everyone watches and listens. There is darkness, only the burning embers of the hearth throw a dim light over the scene. Suddenly the *ojha* gets excited and bursts into lively incantations, turning his head right and left, and stirring the rice with frenzy until he falls into a trance, in which it seems to him that he is wandering about the fields, rocks and ravines of the village in search of the *bhuts*. He sees them all, some seated at the entrance of a cave, some perched on trees, some digging, some ploughing, some washing their clothes. As he sees them he calls each by name. Those first named pay no attention to him, but suddenly he remarks that one of them becomes shy when his name is pronounced. He sticks to that name, repeating it continually until the *bhut* cannot stand it any more, and out of shame comes into the winnowing fan and shakes it with rage till the *ojha* gets frightened, throws it on

the ground and gets up in a fright. Now, there is not the least doubt that at that moment the winnowing fan moves by itself, raised as it were in the air by an invisible hand. Most probably this is a phenomenon like that of turning the table. There is no doubt either that the *ojha* sees vividly all these unreal beings. They have repeatedly heard from the mouth of their *guru* most graphic and frightful descriptions of *bhuts*, making their hair stand on end, and so impregnated are they with these thoughts that their imagination is excited to the utmost by their efforts to discover the *bhuts*, and by the effects of the monotonous incantations most readily yield to hallucinations. The fact is that they do see. One can fancy how strong is their faith. Macbeth saw the dagger and shouted in his fright: "Is this a dagger. My eyes are made the fools of the other senses or else worth all the rest." He doubted in spite of the vividness of the apparition. The poor aborigines does not reflect so far. For him his eyes are worth all the other senses. He sees, and at once believes what he sees, is. It is therefore difficult to convert an old *ojha* to Christianity, but when they are really converted they are the best.

When the guilty *bhut* has, as they say, shaken the winnowing-fan, the *ojha* lights his lamp to make sure that he has discovered the right *bhut*. This is called *ras-batti-karna*. In the flickering flame he sees the shade of the *bhut* whose name he has repeatedly pronounced. When the sick man gets all right after the first seance, the *ojha* asks for a fowl which he sacrifices to the *bhut*. But when the man gets all right only after repeated *ghosnas*, or when the other people of the house get sick also, the conclusion is that the *bhut* has taken possession of the house and will not leave it without being expelled by force. This is *Niksari*. But this expulsion is a very expensive business, and the people are seldom ready to incur all the expenses at once. The least that can be offered is three pigs, two goats, six fowls, and one rupee four annas to the *ojha*. Now, how to get rid of the *bhut* till the man is able to collect all the victims for the sacrifice? Again, let us put aside all our ideas of mysticism and try to think like those people. The *ojha* can catch the *bhut* in his lamp; he has seen him, therefore it is there. The only thing is to imprison him temporarily until steps can be taken to imprison him completely. He therefore begins his *ghosna*, until he catches the *bhut* in his lamp. When he gets him there he takes out the wick and shuts it up in a cone of *sakhua* leaves. This is obviously rather a *pis aller* of a prison, and the *bhut* might easily get loose. But the *ojha* is a man of expedients; and to prevent the *bhut* escaping he offers a sacrifice to his patron *deota* and asks him to watch the *bhut* like a sentinel till the *niksari* which he promises to perform after three or six months. He then takes the cone with the *bhut* to the next ant-hill, bores a hole in it and deposits the mischievous *bhut* inside and shuts the opening with a stone. The sacrifice to the patron *deota* is offered there, and the blood of the victim is spilt near the opening. There the patron *deota* will sit and watch the *bhut* till the *niksari* is performed.

Niksari.—When the man has collected all the victims for the sacrifice he tells the *ojha* that everything is ready. The *ojha* then goes to the blacksmith, as he wants this time to secure the *bhut* well and put him in iron. He has, therefore, an iron cone made just in the shape of a paper cone with one of the sides protruding. This is called *singhi*. In the evening, armed with his *singhi* and accompanied by two of his pupils

carrying a lamp, two antelope horns and a *bhanda* or earthen pot painted red and white inside, he goes to the house of the votary. Plenty of rice-beer has been prepared for the exorcists, as they will have hard work. The *ghosna* goes on the whole night with great vehemence till about 3 o'clock in the morning, when the whole party falls into a trance and the *ojha* declares that *Pat* or some other great *deota* is riding on his shoulders and orders him to hammer the *bhut*. He gets up, seizes the antelope horn and begins to hammer in all the corners of the house like a madman upsetting everything, whilst the people of the house anxiously wait, trembling with fear and constantly asking him if he will be able to drive out the *bhut*. Of course he will. He continues hammering for half an hour and calls one of his pupils also to help him. At the end, panting and exhausted, he declares that the *bhut* is subdued. He then lights his lamp and ascertains that the *bhut* is really exhausted and asks for mercy. He will then take out the wick and put it into the iron cone, but to be sure that the *bhut* is not pretending he takes out the wick, puts it back into the lamp, hammers again, lights it again and repeats the operation three or four times till the *bhut* appears to be fainting. *Bhuts* are great rascals, and ought to be treated as such, and no precaution is omitted to secure them properly. At last the wick with the *bhut* is put in the iron cone, which is shut by hammering the protruding end over the opening. The *bhut* is now well secured. A procession is formed, the offering in front. One of the pupils carries the *bhanda* with a lamp burning inside. The people of the village follow. Everyone leaves the house, the *ojha* last of all carrying the *singhi*. He himself carefully shuts the door, and all march to the ant-hill in which the *ojha* had put the *ex voto* before. There the *ojha* takes out the *sakhua* leaf with the *arwa* rice, and then the slaughter begins. First a white cock to Dharmes, saying : “ *Satttri Maharaj*, a burden on the head of women, a burden on the shoulders of men.” Then follow a black fowl to *Dakhin*, a black cock to *Darha*, one black and white to the ancestors, then again a pig for *Dakhin*, one reddish white for *Darha*, and one black and white for *Churil*. Some of the blood is poured on the *singhi*, in the ant-hill and in the *bhanda*. In a shoot of *sakhua*, one inch thick and one foot long, they insert one pice and some turmeric. This they deposit in the ant-hill, put a stone over it and shut it well, pronouncing this anathema : “If you descend to the centre of the earth may 16 cobras bite you ; if you ascend up may vultures eat you ; if you fly may your wing break ; if you try to come back may your leg break.” After this they wash their hands and feet and go a little aside to offer a white cock to Dharmes saying : “ *He*, Dharmes, deign to persuade this *bhut* not to tease us any more. We are stupid men, thou knowest what is to be done. We do not know.” A he-goat is then sacrificed to *Pat* or whatever other *deota* that has helped in securing the *bhut*. Of course they eat there and then the flesh of the offerings. When they return the *ojha* opens the door of the house and has it cleaned and besmeared with cow-dung by one of his pupils. He goes then to sit in a corner, and the people come in like strangers. He receives them as such and welcomes them, saying that they can stay, that everything is all right. The comedy is over and the *ojha* gets one rupee and four annas and a pot of beer.

Kansphandi or test by the plate (the finding out of a *dain bisahi* or witch).—When in spite of the *ghosna* and *niksari* sickness is always recurring, they think they cannot get

rid of it unless they catch the woman or *dain bisahi* who, by the force of her *mantras*, causes the *bhuts* to attack them continually. This is also the work of the *ojha*. He comes in the evening and proceeds as he does for the *ghosna* the whole night, till the rising of the sun. At about 8 o'clock he goes into the garden or into a grove with a brass plate called *chepi* and a *lota* of water. Arrived at the place appointed for the *kansphandi*, he pours water into the *chepi* before the people that have assembled. He then drops into it a grain of *kurthi* (*Dolichos uniflorus*), and calling the people that have organised the *kansphandi*, bids them look at the grain of *kurthi*. He himself looks at the shadow of it and sees the woman that they have suspected to be the cause of the sickness. He describes her, says what she is doing, how many children she has, etc. etc., and at last pronounces her name. The people, enraged, get up, go to her house and abuse and threaten her, in order to force her to confess her guilt. If she denies, they have recourse to the *sokha*.

The *sokha* is generally a Hindu or a low-caste Muhammadan, or even an Uraon *bhagat*. A *sokha* is not allowed to eat meat or to drink any intoxicating liquor. The people generally choose one living very far, not less than 15 or 20 miles from their village, so that they can be sure that he does not know what is going on there. They take with them a handful of rice. When they come near the *sokha* they tell him, "We have come to you for a very important business. You are our father and mother. We are in trouble: help us." The *sokha* gets up without asking any question, brings some burning charcoal from the fire, and lets fall in it some incense and a few grains of the rice the people have brought. He sits near the fire, shakes his head violently and soon falls into a trance, always intently looking into the fire. The people are sitting round him. He then puts all kinds of questions as if speaking to himself, and answers them all himself. "What kind of a woman?"—"Oh yes, she looks so and so." "How many children has she got?"—"Oh yes, so many." "Where is she living?"—"Oh yes, in such and such a place." After some time he comes back to his senses and asks the people what he has been saying. They tell him, and he asks them if he has given the true descriptions of the *dain bisahi*. If they are not satisfied with that, the *sokha* is ready to say her name; but they have to pay him five rupees. For this he has generally to make use of the *kansphandi* or the test by the plate. The telling of the name is called *nam tipi*.

Now, there is not the least doubt that the *sokha* does not know the people who come to consult him. He does not even know the name of their village. There are indeed some charlatans among the *sokhas*, but many of them are of the real type. There is no question either of the *ojha* communicating with the *sokha*. How is it that they can designate the same person? When the name given by the *sokha* is the same as that given by the *ojha*, they come back and go to their zemindar to consult him. He comes, assembles the people of the village, and they send the *chaukidar* who, in his dignity of *Maharani-ki-naukar*, seizes the *dain bisahi* and brings her to the dancing place. She has to pay first a fine of Rs. 5 or Rs. 10 to the zemindar. Fancy now the scene that goes on when all these infuriated savages gratify their rage against the person they think to be the cause of the loss of their parents and children! There is not an insult that she has not to bear: they strike her, kick her, and sometimes burn her hands and legs and even kill

her. When their first burst of fury is over, they shave her hair entirely, lead her to the boundaries of the village and threaten to kill her if she dares to come back. Now, seeing the result of these practices, would it not be good to follow the example of James the first and make these punishable offences? Those *ojhas* and *sokhas* are most dangerous men and the cause of much mischief. Out of a hundred cases of *dain bisahi* there is not one that goes before the court, for the victims cannot produce a single witness. Even her own children abandon her and shrink from her.

Rog khedna (the driving out of sickness).—This is a very curious custom which illustrates well the simplicity of their ideas. Anyone who has travelled in Chota Nagpur has certainly met on his way a heap of broken earthen pots, fragments of mats and old brooms. This is due to the *rog khedna*. When there is a kind of epidemic of small ailments, especially among children, sore-throats, diarrhœa, etc., it is attributed to a band of foreign Bhulas who have crossed the boundaries of the village. As they are considered to be beggars, they are treated as such, and the people play them a nasty trick. The *pahan* or the *ojha* is called and a fowl is given to him. All the women assemble, each one carrying something—one an old earthen pot, another a piece of mat, a third an old broom. The *pahan* or the *ojha* calls all the Bhulas and pretends to feed the fowl with *arwa* rice as if to sacrifice it to them. Of course, the poor fellows are not accustomed to such a treat and would follow the *pahan* to the end of the earth to get it, especially when they see all the things that are prepared for them in the shape of old pots and mats. Being like Doms, they are not particular about their caste. Then the *pahan* carrying the fowl heads the procession to the boundaries of the nearest village. There instead of sacrificing to the Bhulas, he summons Duharia, sacrifices the fowl to him, and after making a hole in the ground on one side of the road, pours the blood of the offering into it. Of course, Duharia is bound now to stick there and keep an eye on the Bhulas to prevent them from coming back, but Duharia is a *chaukidar*, and like his *confrères* often goes to sleep. To obviate this difficulty and prevent the Bhulas from coming back without his knowledge, they put a string across the road connected with the hole in which Duharia is sitting. Any Bhula trying to come back will knock his foot against the string and wake up Duharia.

Gaonsaji.—This is perhaps the strangest ceremony of all, and the best calculated to deceive these stupid people. There is a mixture of hypnotism and fraud in it. The fraud is on the part of the *pahans* and the *ojhas*. In the fraud the latter are not deceived, but they are also deceived in the effects of hypnotism, as they believe it to be produced by a *deota*. And here a word should be said about their way of looking upon trances. They call it *bharna uthna*, i.e., to rise mad. They believe that the heavy shade of a *deota* comes and oppresses the shade of the man subjected to a trance, so that his body is moved (*chalaned*) by the shade of the *deotas*. To express our idea that a man is easily hypnotised, we say that he is a fit subject for hypnotism. To express the same idea they say that the man (*halka chhain-ka-hai*) has a light shade that can be easily oppressed by the shade of a *deota*. We have spoken before of the *sarna dari*, or the sacred fountain in which a handful of every kind of produce of the country has been deposited in hollow bamboos or earthen pots, etc., the water of which contains all kinds of

blessings for the crops. When any of those receptacles, containing either paddy or any other produce, has disappeared from the sacred fountain, the crops are sure to fail, and will continue to fail until they are found again and replaced in the fountain. The *gaonsaji* is the ceremony performed to find out where the *bhuts* have hidden the precious pots, for no one but a *bhut* can be mischievous enough to commit such a crime. When, therefore, the crops have failed for several years, the only possible cause is that the sacred fountain has been desecrated by the disappearance of the blessing-producing pots. The *pahan* and the *ojhas* of the place agree together, go to the fountain, take out the pots, and hide them in ditches and ravines. They go then to the chief man of the village and settle a day for the *gaonsaji*. Offerings for the sacrifice are collected, and on the appointed day, *ojhas* from the surrounding villages are called. These and the village *ojhas* and the *pahans* proceed to the *sarna* accompanied by the people. The *ojhas* with their lamps sit in the middle, and the people squat around them. Lots of drummers *tam-tam*, whilst the *ojhas* begin their incantations together to discover the *bhut* who is the cause of the misfortune. Being sometimes ten or twelve in number, they soon find him out and oblige him to come to their lamp, whence he is taken and shut up in a *singhi* as in the *niksari*. The thief being now bound and secured, the difficulty is to find out the stolen property, as the *bhut* will never confess his guilt. Only a powerful *deota* can subdue him. They, therefore, begin working at the *ghasna* with a vengeance, invoking all the *deotas* of the earth and entreating one of them to be so kind as to cover one of the men present with his shade. The scene is well calculated to hypnotise even worse subjects than the natives. All the *ojhas* are chanting their incantations and turning the rice in their winnowing fans with frenzy. Moving their heads to and fro, the drummers are beating the *tam-tam*, doing the same, and very soon the heads of all the congregation are moving. This lasts sometimes a very long time, until one of the assembly, or one of the *ojhas*, falls into convulsions. Then the incantations and noise redouble, the *ojhas* repeating always the name of the *deota* they were pronouncing when the man began to show signs of possession. On, on they go till the man falls into a real trance. Then the *singhi* in which the *ojhas* have shut up the guilty *bhut* is put in his hands, and he runs about as if in search of something, followed by the *ojhas*, the drummers, and all the people vociferating imprecations against the *bhuts* and exciting the *deota* to press him hard. But the *bhut* is not so easily subdued and very often takes the *deota* to a different place from that in which he is credited with having hidden the sacred thing. There they dig, and if nothing is found, their imprecations against the *bhut* and their invocations to the *deota* redouble. At last, after several fruitless attempts at deceit, the *bhut* takes the possessed man to the right place. This is repeated five or six times until all the pots are found out. This ceremony sometimes lasts eight days. The sacred pots are then replaced in the fountain by the *pahan*, and sacrifices are offered to *Pāt* and other *deotas* who have helped them. The *singhi* with the *bhuts* are thrown into the river. Now we know that the *pahan* and the *ojhas* have hidden the pots, but the difficulty is to explain how the man who has fallen into a trance can find them out. The supposition of his being an accomplice cannot be held, as anyone can fall into a trance, and the *ojhas* do not know who will be the man. It is, however, true that any mesmerist is able to make his

subject see, hear, taste or feel in obedience to suggestions; and the *ojhas*, having mesmerised the man, can suggest him to do as they like. It is wonderful how easily natives fall into a trance! In a Mission School, in Chota Nagpur, every time the boys sang and beat the *lamtam* together they constantly fell into trances and would run like rats along the rafters of the school, and do all kinds of wonderful things.

III.—SOCIAL CUSTOMS.

The Uraons are a very prolific race, and, whenever they are allowed to live without being too much oppressed, they increase prodigiously. What strikes you when you come to an Uraon village is the number of small dirty children playing everywhere, while you can scarcely meet a woman that does not carry a baby on her back. The women seem, to a great extent, to have been exempted from the curse of our first mother: "Thou shalt bring forth, etc." They seem to give birth to their children with the greatest ease. There is no period of uncleanness, and, the very day after giving birth to a child, you will see the mother with her baby tied up in a cloth on her back and a *ghagri* on her head going, as if nothing had happened, to the village spring.

Generally eight or ten days after the birth of a child they have the ceremony of the *chhathi* or the giving of the name; in this we find an instance of how difficult it is at times to reconcile the proverbial indifference and unprovidence of the savage with the precaution they take for the welfare of their children, even at this early stage of their existence. On the day appointed for the *chhathi*, some men of the village representing the *panch*, and some members of the family, assemble at the house of the child. Two leaf cups, one full of water and the other full of paddy, are brought. The head of the child is shaved and his hair is put in the cup full of water. The men representing the *panch* sit round the cups and invoke their forefathers; and, after pronouncing their usual formula, "Above God, below the *panch*," one of them takes a grain of paddy and lets it fall in the water in the name of God. Then he takes another grain and lets it fall in the name of the *panch*. These two have to meet, if not they try a second and third, and, if after several attempts the grain do not meet, they give up the ceremony and the child is always looked upon with suspicion. When, however, the two grains have met, they are satisfied that God is propitious to the child. They then let another grain fall in the name of the child, and one in the name of each of his ancestors, continuing till one of the grains meets with the one dropped in the child's name. The name pronounced when this particular grain is dropped in will be the name of the child. The succession of names brought on at is as follows:—First the paternal grandfather's name, then the paternal great-grandfather's, the father's, the paternal uncle's, and the maternal grandfather's; then the names of other relatives.

The paddy left in the second cup after the ceremony is kept for seed, and what it yields at harvest time is kept and sown again, and so on from year to year until, by a constant progression, the paddy is sufficient to buy a cow or some goats which, in their turn, will increase and become the property of the child. This is called *punji*, and is designed to be given at the time of marriage. But as the Uraons know fully well how weak are the ties of hymen, they wait generally till the first child is born to the married

couple before giving the *punji*. There is, however, a kind of promise made at the time of marriage. When food is brought to the boy or girl, they pretend not to want to eat it. Then their respective fathers-in-law come and cause them to eat, but no entreaty can succeed until they put a sign with cow-dung or goat-dung on their forehead, meaning that a *punji* of cows or goats will be given to them. If, as it happens sometimes, the parents of the girl, in time of distress, have eaten up the *punji* of their child, the father takes his daughter and puts her in the arms of the boy telling him: "This is all I can give you."

When a boy is six or seven years old, it is time for him to become a member of the *dhumkuru* or common dormitory. The eldest boys catch hold of his left arm, and, with burning cloth, burn out five deep marks on the lower part of his arm. This they do to be recognised by the Uraons at their death, when they go into the other world. The Uraon girls are similarly all tattooed in one particular way: three parallel vertical lines are traced on the forehead, the extreme ones having the shape of a badly formed F. Then two vertical parallel lines on both temples crossed by another line, forming a kind of capital H, with one side protruding. Sometimes they add also one spot on the hollow of the nose and one spot on the chin.

Dhumkuria.—As the Uraons have not accommodation enough for their children to sleep in the house, they have a common dormitory in which the boys sleep together. As for the girls, they go and generally sleep in the house of an old widow who is not such a fearful cerberus as not to be softened by kind attentions from the boys of the *dhumkuria*. The would-be vestals are then, as may be imagined, exposed to many dangers. In villages in which they less respect themselves, the boys and girls sleep promiscuously together in the same dormitory. The *dhumkuria* boys form a kind of association; and they pledge themselves to the greatest secrecy about what is going on in their dormitory. Woe to the boy who dares to break that pledge. He would be most unmercifully beaten and looked upon as an outcast.

In order, they say, to make the boys hardy members of the tribe, they have a kind of mutual training in which the eldest boys of the *dhumkuria* bully the younger ones, and make them suffer all kinds of trouble and bodily punishments. There is, in fact, a regular system of bullying. Uraon boys and girls are very tender-hearted and form strong friendships. When two girls feel a great affection for each other they swear eternal friendship and call each other by the sweet name of *gui*, my flower. This kind of friendship is sealed by mutual presents. Among the boys the same custom exists, and they call each other *sar*, *phul*, *sangi* or *karamdar*.

When boys are about 12 years of age they divide into different classes. Those who belong to a well-to-do family stay in the house of their parents and work with them and for them. Those whose parents are not rich enough to feed them become either *dhangar* or *ghar damad*, *ghardijia*.

Dhangar.—A *dhangar* is a contract labourer. There are interesting ceremonies in connection with the engagement of a *dhangar*. This is done at the end of January, in *Magh*. When an Uraon farmer wishes to engage a young man as a *dhangar* he calls him to his house at the feast of *Magh*. There are always some other people present besides

the members of the family. Rice-beer has, of course, been prepared, and when the young man is introduced to the company, the mistress of the house comes and washes his feet therewith. This is only a preliminary to the binding ceremony, for if he allows himself immediately afterwards to be also anointed with oil, then he is considered to have signed a contract by which he engages himself to serve in the house on the following conditions, which are very just and very liberal:—

1. Board and lodging. 2. His *pogri*, which depends on his strength. In June, the boy will get as much paddy as he can carry in one side of the *bangi* to sow in a field that has been prepared for him. The produce will be his property. He will get also seven measures (*pailas*) of millet to be sown in a field, also prepared for him, and he will be allowed to sow cotton in a small piece of land in which two seers of paddy can be sown. Besides the produce of all this he gets at the end of the year seven baskets of paddy as big as he can carry away with his *bangi*. This contract lasts only one year, after which he is free to remain with his old master or choose a new one. In the beginning of *Magh* there is a feast in the house lasting two days. On the first day, the *dhangar* goes to the jungle and brings a good load of wood to bake bread. They spend the evening and a great part of the night in dancing, drinking and eating bread, the master and the *dhangar* supplying each two *handias*. The next day is spent by the *dhangar* in hunting and fishing; and in the evening he will bring to his master such delicacies as rats, mice, etc. On his arrival the mistress of the house anoints him with oil and gives him two combs, whilst the farmer asks him if his intention is to leave him or remain with him. On this he will give his answer, and not another word will be said on the subject.

The next morning the master and *dhangar* go together to plough a field, and if the latter has made up his mind to leave service, his master in coming back will put in his hands one ploughshare and two skin ropes to tie the yoke. This is the sealing of his dismissal and the breaking up of the mutual contract. If he has made up his mind to remain this last ceremony will not take place and the contract will last for one year more.

Ghardamad or *Ghardijia*.—When the parents of a boy see that they will not be able to provide a wife for their son, they place him in a house as *ghar damad*. Like Jacob he has to work several years to get his wife. There is no special ceremony, only the boys' parents come to the house of their future relatives. They drink rice-beer together, and when leaving they say: Now this is your child, he belongs to you; take him as your own son.

During all the time that he remains in the house he is treated exactly like a member of the family, and gets board, lodging and raiment like all the others, but like a *dhangar* he also gets his *pogri*, which consists of one maund of paddy and six measures of *gundli* to be sown in a field prepared for him. The produce will be for him, and he is allowed either to keep it in the house of his future father-in-law or lend it out at interest. As long as he remains in the house of his father-in-law, even after marriage, he is entitled to his *pogri*. He can leave the house and work for himself when he likes.

Caste.—The Uraons form what may be called a wild tribe, without any general administrative organization; there is no recognized headman of the whole tribe, and the

authority of any given man does not reach beyond the limits of his own village. The only organization to safeguard the customs of the tribe is a general *panchayat* of chief men of a group of villages. This takes place very seldom, and only when a man has to be ejected from the tribe or readmitted into it.

The following are the offences for which the punishment is expulsion from the tribe :—

- (1) Eating cooked rice with any man not belonging to the tribe, or eating rice cooked by anyone but a member of the tribe.
- (2) Sexual intercourse with any member of any other caste.
- (3) Drinking water, rice-beer or eating bread with any member of caste or tribe with whom it is forbidden to do so.

They are allowed to drink water and rice-beer with all the aboriginal and semi-aboriginal tribes except the Turis. They can also eat bread and meat with them, provided they be cooked in a vessel that has not been used previously for cooking rice or curry vegetables. There is no restriction on eating or smoking tobacco with anyone. They lose their caste by drinking water with Lohars, Ghaṣis, Turis, Chamars, Dusadhs.

The readmission into the caste is the work of the *kartaha*. His office is hereditary. There are three or four of them in every district.

When a man has been ejected from the tribe for one of the offences mentioned above, and wishes to be readmitted, he goes to the *kartaha* who fixes a day for the *panchayat*. On the appointed day all the chief men of the surrounding villages are summoned to attend at the meeting. They all assemble at the village of the delinquent and form a great committee with the *kartaha* at their head. They discuss the question, weigh the fault of the man, and settle how much he has to pay and give. This depends on the fault committed and on the means of the guilty man. The penalty is always a very heavy one for poor people. He has first to feed all the members of *panchayat* and the whole village for one day and a half. Of course, everybody makes the most of the opportunity, and they are not satisfied with a dry meal with rice and meat, but they must be well supplied also with plenty of rice-beer. The least the *kartaha* takes for his remuneration is Rs. 10. A white goat is sacrificed to *Dharmes*, and the guilty man has to drink some of its blood to wash away the stain of his sin. At the last common meal he is called, and if he has done everything to the satisfaction of the *panchayat*, he is allowed to sit and eat with everyone, not, however, before getting a sound admonition from the *kartaha*.

The *Panch*.—In every village there is a kind of administration which, however, is far from being the same everywhere. In its most ancient form it consists of: (1) The *panch*; (2) The *munda*; (3) The *pahan*; (4) The *mahto*. Where this form exists the people are divided into three *khunts*—the *pahan khunt*, the *mahto khunt*, and the *munda khunt*. The *panch* or *panchayat*: According to the etymology of the word this should be composed of five members only, but in practice the *panch* is the whole community represented by its eldest members. A *panchayat* is an assembly of the *panch* or the eldest people of the village to discuss a question or settle difficulties that arise in the

community. There is no doubt that formerly the authority of the *panch* was paramount among the Uraons. In older times the *panch* consisted of the oldest members of a certain group of villages who used to hold the *panchayat* in the village in which a difficulty had to be settled. To defray the expenses of these assemblies they had put aside in every village a certain amount of land called *panchaiti khet*. This belonged to the community, and was cultivated by anyone on condition that he fed the *panch* when there was an assembly. Now, since the introduction of civilization into the country, the Uraons have acquired the knowledge of the Courts of Justice, and the prestige of this institution has somewhat suffered, though it is still held in the greatest reverence. There is a time-honoured expression which shows their respect for the *panch*. In every important affair before beginning their deliberations they say: "Above God, below the *panch*"—meaning that after God, the *panch* is the highest authority.

In villages where there are not two parties in continual opposition to each other, the *panch* can be relied upon to settle questions in the best way possible, and, even where frictions exist, there is no doubt that much light can be thrown upon village difficulties, and much information can be gathered on land and other affairs by assisting at a discussion of the *panch*. Practically, in cases where the law does not interfere, the *panchayat* can decide all difficulties and disputes that can arise in an Uraon community. They can settle land disputes, difficulties about inheritance, marriage questions, adultery cases, and any infringement of the customs of the tribe. They can impose fines, the penalty of default being treated as an outcast in the village. Of course the local police, seeing excellent opportunities of taking bribes, slip away from them and try to minimize the authority of the *panch*; but thanks to the good sense and administrative foresight of the higher authorities, the *panch* is allowed to do its work undisturbed as long as it does not interfere directly with the law.

The *pahan*, besides his religious duties and prerogatives, must be considered also as an authority in the temporal affairs of the village. He is looked on as the man who knows best the boundaries of the different lands of the village, and specially the boundaries of his own village. Whenever there is a dispute about them he is consulted. Formerly when a dispute arose between two villages about their respective boundaries, there was a ceremony a kind of ordeal resembling the *jugement de Dieu*. A hole was made on the two different boundaries designated by the two different *pahans*; they had to stand knee deep with their legs buried in the ground on the boundary that each maintained. The one who stood the ordeal the longer was judged in the right. This ceremony is now very seldom practised. It is called *gor-gari* or the burying of the leg.

To understand the *khunt* system we have to go back in mind to the time when the Uraons first settled in Chota Nagpur. The Mundaris were there before them. They had cleared the jungle and made several villages, but there were still many more to be made. As there was plenty of room for both, the Mundaris did not interfere with the new-comers. These in their turn began to clear the jungle and make new paddy-fields. At that time there was no raja in possession of the country, and the Uraons adopted the same system as that prevailing among the Mundaris. The first son of the first settler became the *munda*, namely the head or chief, and the second became the *pahan*. Later

on the third son became the *mahto*. These three families increased and formed three different groups called by them *khunts*, viz, the *munda khunt*, the *pahan khunt*, and the *mahto khunt*; and, up to this date, in villages where the Uraons were the first settlers, these three *khunts* exist. As they are all the descendants of the same man, *i.e.*, the first settler, all the members of these three *khunts*, in the same village, have the same *gotra* or family name.

As there was no raja to interfere with them, they became possessors of their lands as *primi occupantes*, and they retain their lands rent free up till now under the name of *bhuimar*. According to their hereditary system the *munda*, or first son, got more land than the *pahan* or second son, and the *pahan* more than the *mahto* or third son, so that more *bhuimari* land belongs to the *munda khunt* than to the *pahan khunt*, and to the *pahan khunt* more than to the *mahto khunt*.

The *munda* became the chief of the village as being the possessor of the most lands. The *pahan*, besides his share by inheritance in the *bhuimari* lands, got from the community about eight bighas of land which they call *pahanai*. This he cultivates to defray the expenses connected with the different *pujas*. Later on he took two assistants, namely, the *pujar* and the *panbhara*, and out of his *pahanai* he gave two bighas to the *pujar* and one bigha to the *panbhara*. This is called *dalekatari*. The *mahto*, whose office was at first, as it were that of the policeman of the village, got also a special land from the community called *mahtoi khet*. When the rajas began to take possession of the country, they left the first settlers, namely, the three *khunts*, in possession of their respective lands, whilst all the new settlers had to pay rents, and the *mahto* became the collector of rents in the raja's name. He remained also, as it were, the burgomaster of the village, and all the orders emanating from the raja and, later on, from Government were given to the *raiya*s through him. This state of things lasted for some time, until the raja began to distribute villages to his servants who thus became landholders. They collected the rents, but the *mahto* retained his position in the eyes of the people and the Police. Now this *khunt* system exists only in villages where the Oraons were the first settlers. In other parts of the country, where they settled after the country had been taken possession of by the rajas, the *khunt* system does not exist, and there are no more any *bhuimari* or rent-free lands.

In some villages, where Mundaris and Uraons have settled from time immemorial, the *munda* and *pahan* are invariably Mundaris whilst the *mahto* is an Uraon. In more recent villages there is no *munda*; there is, however, always a *pahan* who cultivates rent free his *pahanai*, or about seven or eight bighas of land; and the *mahto* is only, as it were, the servant of the zemindar, who for his service gets from him a piece of land rent free.

There is also the *bhut kheta*, which is generally cultivated by the *pahan khunt* people. The condition of the tenure is that they have to supply big animals like bullocks and buffaloes for the sacrifices. This is called *bhut kheta*, because these fields are supposed to be haunted by *bhuts* and the produce must be used in feeding them.

Endogamy.—The Uraons are a purely and absolutely endogamous tribe. On no account can they intermarry with any other tribe or caste. Anyone marrying out of the tribe would be at once ejected from it, and could not be readmitted before leaving his

foreign wife. They are also purely totemistic and divided into a great number of groups or septs, each bearing the name either of a plant or an animal. These divisions of the caste are called *gotras* and are exogamous, and on no account will they allow two people of the same *gotras* to marry. The *gotra* is always reckoned solely from the male side. The marriage rules are very simple and may be formulated thus: No one is allowed to marry out of the tribe or with anyone of his own *gotra*, the *gotra* of the mother being altogether disregarded; but relationship without any totemistic hindrance goes to the third generation. Their standard formula is: We change our blood to the third generation.

They do not know the origin of their totems, and do not seem to attach very great importance to the observances connected with them. Here is a list of them with the restriction put upon them.

The observances are of three kinds:—1. Not to eat the totem of the *gotra*. 2. No to eat the fruit of it. 3. Not to use the oil extracted from its fruit or touch it.

1. Not to eat.—

- (a) *Bokhla*—Paddy Bird.
- (b) *Chigalo*—Jackal.
- (c) *Dhichua*—King crow.
- (d) *Ekka* or *Khachhap*—Tortoise.
- (e) *Kayu*—Wild dog.
- (f) *Kerketa*—A kind of hedge sparrow.
- (g) *Kinds*—A kind of crop.
- (h) *Khakha*—A crow.
- (i) *Khalkho*—Strad fish.
- (j) *Gidhi*—Vulture.
- (k) *Kispota*—The bowels of a pig.
- (l) *Lakra*—Tiger.
- (m) *Minj*—An eel.
- (n) *Orgorao*—Hawk.
- (o) *Biga-Aluman*—Baboon.

2. Not to eat the fruit of—

- Bara*—The fig tree (*ficus indica*).
- Madgi*—*Mahua*.
- Kirs Khochol* (*lit.* pig's bone) a tree full of thorns.

3. Not to use the oil of—

- Kujura*—a kind of long creeper, the fruit of which yields a kind of oil which is not to be used by the people of that *gotra*.
- Khers*—Paddy: the people of this *gotra* can not use conji water.
- Beh*—Salt: to be used only as condiment, not to be eaten alone.
- Panna*—Iron: can not be touched with the mouth.

IV.—MARRIAGE.

Marriage ceremonies of the Uraons are very complicated, but as they are very quaint nothing will be omitted in their description. First, let it be known that the boy and girl have absolutely nothing to say in the matter. Everything is settled by the parents. Infant marriage is not in honour among the Uraons, and the tendency is rather to put off the marriage as long as they can. The average age of the bridegroom is 16 and that of the bride 14 or 15.

Preliminaries.—When a boy is about 13 years of age, the parents look out for a wife for him. When they have found a girl, who they think will suit their boy, they go to her house and propose to the father. If he accepts the proposal, a day is settled for the girl's father to come and see the boy. On his way he takes great care to notice all omens on the road. If a jackal crosses the road from right to left, if he meets a woman carrying ashes and clothes in an earthen vessel, if a dead animal is being removed, if a snake or vulture crosses the path, if the branch of a tree or a fruit falls, if he hears the cry of an owl or jackal, etc., the errand is a bad one.

On the contrary a woman carrying water or throwing cow-dung, a jackal crossing from left to right, monkeys crossing the road—these are all considered good omens.

As soon as the father arrives, the question of the omens seen on the road is discussed. If any of the bad omens have been noticed they agree that the marriage should not take place. "Brother," they say, "the gods do not want this marriage to take place: let us not go against their will." If on the contrary nothing unlucky has happened, they eat and drink together and a day for the *panbandhi* is fixed.

Panbandhi, or the settling of the price.—This generally takes place eight days after the first visit. The boy's father, accompanied by some men of the village representing the *panch*, start in the evening carrying with them $2\frac{1}{2}$ maunds of paddy, $1\frac{1}{2}$ maund of *gundli*, some *urid* and *seron*. This will be the sealing of the first arrangement, and, from that time, both fathers call themselves *samdi*. That evening nothing is done. The next morning the girl's mother, accompanied by all the matrons of the village, come to wash and anoint the feet of the boy's father who gives them one rupee and promises to add four rupees more on the marriage day. This is called the *panbandhi*. Then the rejoicings begin. All the people of the village are invited; two boys come and anoint the visitors with oil. From every house of the village that can afford it a *handia* or pot of rice-beer is brought, and they drink together and make merry. All this time the girl has been kept aside, but now she suddenly sallies forth carrying a *handia* on her head. A murmur of admiration greets her when, stepping through the crowd, she comes and stands in front of her future father-in-law, who at once takes the *handia* from her head embraces her and gives her one rupee. From that time, during the whole time of the feast, the girl remains sitting at the feet of her father-in-law. The whole party meanwhile continue drinking and talking; and voices rise so high that they cannot hear one another. As a diversion the old women of the village all come tumbling in very drunk and wearing fantastic hats made of leaves, gesticulating like devils and carrying a straw manikin representing the bridegroom. They all look like old witches, and, in their drunken state, are very mischievous.

Let us draw a veil on this disgusting scene—it would not do to listen to the obscene songs and filthy jests that are going on for half an hour to the great merriment of the drunken assembly. The *panbandhi* is then over and the party returns home. The marriage will take place only two or three years afterwards. During that period two regular visits will be paid annually by the girl's parents—one in June called *asari*, and one in December called *aghani*. At these two feasts *handia* is supplied by the boy's father and a goat or pig is killed.

Gharbari.—A few days before the marriage another visit and ceremony will take place which is called *gharbari*. On that day the bride's father, accompanied by the *panch* of his village, comes to settle about the day of the marriage. For this occasion 15 *handias* or pots of rice-beer have been prepared, and all the village being invited in addition. Everyone brings one *handia* from his house, so that rice-beer is again flowing liberally. They all gather before the house where a bower has been erected; both fathers sit together on a special mat in the middle. At a given signal they both get up, and when silence is gained, they join arms and one of them says: "Above God, below the *panch*. He who wishes to cut, let him cut now. What is joined with iron can be separated, what is joined with skin cannot be separated." The other one in his turn repeats the same sentence and adds: "Now is the time to say the right word." All the party puts then an end to this imposing scene by shouting in chorus, "*Hogeya, hogeya!*"—it is done! Two boys then step in and anoint both fathers with oil. Then they eat and drink and make merry till the evening of the following day. Two pigs and fowls are killed for the feast.

Marriage.—When the day of marriage comes there is a great stir in both villages: all are invited to the feast. A large party of men followed by women carrying bundles of clean clothes on their heads, with all the children dancing round them, accompany the girl. A queer reception awaits them. The people of the boy's village are on the lookout, and scarcely are the visitors in sight, when they see the whole population sallying forth armed with clubs and long bamboo sticks, gesticulating and vociferating. They all gather at the entrance of the village brandishing their sticks as if to repulse a sudden attack. A sham fight ensues, and when their vocabulary of profanity is exhausted, on a given signal, the whole scene is suddenly changed into a merry dance in which the bride and bridegroom take part seated as traddle on the hips of one of their respective friends. This lasts about half an hour, after which the noise subsides and they sit down quietly to prepare their meal.

Meanwhile, the boy's friends are busy preparing their *banquet de fête*. They cannot make speeches, but this special banquet symbolizes, in a most striking manner, all the wishes that could be expressed in the most eloquent speech. Ears of paddy with their stems have been carefully kept by the boy's father. They choose a handful of the best ones sufficient to fill in the mouth of a small earthen pot called *bhanda*. The ears are divided into two parts by bringing one part of the stems over the ears; the stems are then planted below, and the whole is placed in the mouth of a *bhanda* containing rice, turmeric and oil-seeds. In the division of the ears a small lamp is lit in which there are some grains of *urid*, whilst the plaited stems symbolize the close union which will bring forth

plenty, symbolized by the beautiful ears of paddy. The *bhanda* contains all that is necessary to live and make the couple happy. The girls in the meantime have prepared a big rice cake which is placed in a basket close to the *bhanda*. When the meal is over, two women daubed with vermillion, one taking the basket and the other the *bhanda* on their head, dance before the couple, singing most obscene songs: meanwhile the respective mothers are cooking another big loaf of bread which will be eaten by everyone the next morning. It is now very late in the night and everyone retires to sleep. The next morning the bread cooked by the mother is taken to the *dari* or village spring where all the women paratke of it. When they have finished they bring a *ghagri* of water with some leaves of the mango tree in it. Meanwhile the bride and the bridegroom are in the house, being anointed with oil and turmeric by their respective sisters. When everybody has gathered under the bower, the boy and girl are brought out of the house, and a heap is made of a plough yoke, a bundle of thatching grass and a curry-stone. The bride and bridegroom are made to stand on the curry-stone, the boy touching the heels of the girl with his toes, and a long piece of cloth is put round them to screen them from the public. Only their heads and feet can be seen. A goblet full of vermillion is presented to the boy, who dips his finger in it and makes three lines on the forehead of the girl; and the girl does the same to the boy, but as she has to reach him from over her shoulder and cannot see him, the boy gets it anywhere in his face, which never fails to provoke most hearty burst of laughter. The women throw then water over them and shout: "The marriage is done, the marriage is done!" whilst the bashful couple run back into the house. The people outside drink and dance. After half an hour another ceremony takes place to invoke the protection of the ancestors. A special mat is brought in the middle of the bower. Everyone then makes room for the two fathers, who come and sit on the mat having before them six leaf cups placed in a line, and two *sirkis*, or small earthen pots, with a small hole in the side. Three *handias*, or pots of rice-beer, are brought out, two marked with vermillion. The latter are for the Uraons while the third is for the *ghasis* or musicians. Rice-beer is prepared from the *handias* marked with *sindur* and is poured into the *sirkis*. Silence is made, and the fathers ask others in what village their respective forefathers were living. Then taking each a *sirki*, they pour rice-beer in three leaf cups, by reaching one over the arm of the other, invoking the shade of their forefathers and saying, "Render your shade and protection; we have settled this marriage satisfactorily among ourselves; now protect us, partake of the feast and drink the beer we offer you." They then spill some beer on the ground, and the leaf cups are distributed among the crowd and refilled until everyone has drunk of the *sinduria handia*.

All this time the boy and the girl are inside the house. They are now called out and made to sit together outside, where both mothers fondly cool them, by using a fold of their *sari* as a fan, and then anoint them again with oil and daub them with vermillion. They are then bound together by a knot made with their clothes, and they go round the company making *salam* to everyone. They then retire into the house again to allow the people to empty the new *handias* that have been brought. Every ceremony must always be well watered with the home brew. After some time they are again called out and have to assist at a brotherly ceremony called *bainajhara* or *bhawabhasur handia*. In this,

only the members of the family sit together apart from the others. A *handia* is brought, beer is prepared, and the bride brings a cup of it to the bridegroom's brother, and, instead of giving it in his hand, she deposits it on the ground in front of him. This is to seal a kind of tacit agreement that from that time the brother of the bridegroom will never touch the wife of his brother. As brothers have to live sometimes a very long time with their respective wives in the same house, this ceremony is not useless, and the practice of this ceremony becomes a custom as long as the brothers live together.

Then comes the last ceremony which is called *khiritengua handia* or the *handia* of the story. This is considered by them as being the true form of marriage which has been handed down to them by their forefathers. The boy and girl sit together before the people: two *handias* are brought, silence is made, and one of the oldest of the assembly representing the *panch* solemnly rises and addressing the boy first says: "If your wife goes to fetch *sag* and falls from a tree and breaks her leg, do not say that she is disfigured or cripple. You will have to keep and feed her." Then turning to the girl: "When your husband goes hunting, if his arm or leg is broken, do not say that he is a cripple, I won't live with him. Do not say that, for you have to remain with him. If you prepare meat give two shares to him and keep only one for yourself. If you prepare vegetables give him two parts and keep only one part for yourself. If he gets sick and cannot go out, do not say that he is dirty, but clean his mat and wash him." Then again turning to the boy he says: "If your wife gets sick, etc., as above."

By this time the great meal is ready: they eat, drink and make merry.

At night the girl is brought to the boy by her mother. She gives her up saying: "Now, my child, she is yours: I don't give her for a few days, but for ever; take good care of her and love her well." A companion of the boy then seizes the girl in his arms and carries her inside the house of the boy. After depositing his burden he comes out and shuts the door. The day after the marriage they clean the house well and put diluted cow-dung all over the place to purify it from any stain contracted by any invidious stranger. Then they have the *palkhansna* (as described above) to remove from the couple any spell that might have been caused by evil-eyed men during the marriage ceremonies.

Polygamy is allowed but not in honour among the Uraons. There are very few cases among them, and they take a second wife only when the first one is barren or does not give birth to male children.

Divorce is a thing which is most easily settled by the boy or girl running away to the Duars or Assam. If, however, the husband and the wife remain in the country the rule is as follows:—

As long as the husband does not abandon his wife, the *panchayat* is powerless to pronounce the divorce and the girl cannot remarry as long as her husband does not remarry. When the boy agrees to be separated, then a *panchayat* takes place in which it is decided that the girl's parents have to give back what they received as the price of their daughter at the time of marriage. If they have children they belong to the father. If, however, by common agreement, the mother takes away the children, the father has to give them a cloth every year. In case, after some years, he would like to take them back,

he can, but if he has not complied with the custom of giving them a cloth every year, he has to make up for it and pay the mother what she has spent to clothe the children.

For *sagai* or second marriage, the ceremonies are very simple. The parents of the girl bring her to the house of her husband. Whilst they drink rice-beer the boy and girl are made to sit in front of each other, and they anoint each other with oil, the boy with his left hand and the girl with her right hand. After that, one of the women of the village comes and puts vermilion on the forehead of the boy saying, "Feed this woman: she is yours: accept this in her name." For the first *sagai* the price of the girl is Rs. $3\frac{1}{2}$; the second Rs. $2\frac{1}{2}$; the third Rs. $1\frac{1}{2}$; and subsequent *sagais* only eight annas!

Cases of adultery are comparatively rare among them. When offenders are caught they have to pay a heavy fine if they can, or if they cannot they get a smaller fine and a beating.

After marriage the brothers remain as long as they can in the house of their father with their respective wives. As their houses are very small they live huddled together like Noah and his family in the Ark. Of course there are some bickerings among the women, but on the whole the system works admirably, and those are the houses which prosper best in which the brothers remain the longest together.

Their law of succession, of course, is not very complicated. The eldest boy gets about one-fifth more than the others, who get less shares according to age. When one of them dies his wife may choose to remain in the house of her father-in-law or go away. If she remains she is treated like one of the house. If she goes away with the child she gets the share of her husband. But if the boy dies or if she remarries, the boy's share returns to his uncles, in the first case to remain their property, and in the second case to be given back to the boy when he marries. If she goes away without taking the boy with her she gets nothing at all. If a boy follows his mother when she makes *sagai* he has no right to the fortune of his stepfather even if he dies without male issue, but he is entitled to his *pogri* like a *ghar damad*. If a boy is *ghar damad* in a house where there are only girls, and if he remains working in the house of his father-in-law till he dies, he has a right besides his *pogri* to a pair of bullocks, one cow with a calf, plus the hatchet, plough, *khodali* and sickle with which he has worked. In all their hereditary disputes they can have recourse to the *panchayat*, to whose decision they are bound to adhere.

The money remains always in the keeping of the master and mistress of the house, the father or mother of the family. They bury it either in the house or in the garden, and sometimes in the fields, no one knows where. Generally, when they feel that they are dying, they call their pet son and tell him where the treasure is buried. Very often they say nothing, so that much money is lost in this fashion. They believe that after death, the Pachbal or the light shades of the ancestors like to come and sit on these treasures, and it seems they sit very hard. When the children want to unearth the treasure, they say that they can reach the vessel containing the rupees, but as the work of excavating is progressing so the treasure is sinking deeper and deeper as if dragged down by an invisible hand. But it is only in time of great distress that they will dare to try and get at hidden treasure, the secret of which has not been revealed by their parents. There is much

superstition about it, and a common saying among them is: Can the money of the Pach-bal be of any use?

V.—CHARACTER.

The Family.—No one can say that conjugal love is unknown among the Uraons though it becomes only demonstrative in time of sickness. There are indeed very happy couples who are very much attached to each other. The woman is far from being a slave. She has nearly everything to say to the management of the house, and can assert her own authority when her husband tries to interfere in her business. Both are exceedingly fond of their children, and it is admirable how in time of famine they deprive themselves of everything and starve themselves, eating only roots and jungle fruits to be able to give some rice to their children. Their fondness goes so far that they never beat them and very seldom say a harsh word to them. This system of course upsets the rôles, and the children instead of doing the will of their parents, impose their will on them. Up to six or seven years of age they sleep at home, and many a European would be surprised if he could penetrate into the interior of an Uraon family during the long winter evenings. The father is seated on a mat with his children around him, and he propounds riddles to them. The mother is cooking the supper, but not losing a word of what is said, and her face is beaming with pleasure when she looks at the puzzled faces of the little ones. Those riddles are nearly always the same, and have been handed down from generation to generation; but they are as interesting to the children as the stories of Blue Beard, etc. Some of them are also manufactured on the spot.

Here are some specimens:

Young, he adorns himself with flowers; old, he stands stiff with a sword in his hand. What is it? The answer is *kurthi* a kind of pea (*Dolichas uniflorus*).

A gentleman goes on his way carrying a tail in front and one behind. What is it? Answer: an elephant.

A boy perched on a tree with his face marked with smallpox. What is it? Answer: Jack fruit.

When they are tired with this, the most fearful stories of devils (*churel* or *chordwa*) are related to them.

Uraons are considered good cultivators, and they are known to be very good coolies in the tea-gardens, as coolie recruiters get a higher price for an Uraon than for any other labourer. In cultivating the ground they use all the implements that are common all over India. They are most of them occupancy ryots, but some of them *bhuinhari* or rent-free lands, and are called Bhuinhars. These are the first settlers in the village. They have also another kind of land called *korkar*, i.e., paddy-fields which they have made themselves and for which they have to pay only half rents. In some districts a queer custom exists. When a zamindar gives land to a ryot to cultivate he puts in his hand a small pebble called *goti*. This is called *goti dena*, and when the ryot does not wish to cultivate that land any more he gives back the pebble. This is called *goti ghura dena*.

The striking feature of their character is their joviality. When they are together they always laugh and are in the most excellent spirits. Their cheerfulness makes them

swallow many a bitter pill with a light heart, and they appear to be happy even under the most trying circumstances. They appreciate and enjoy a good joke, and, after a short acquaintance, feel quite at ease with Europeans. Well trained and well taken care of they might become good house-servants. But they should not be treated harshly like the Hindus. Strictness tempered by much kindness on the part of their master would make them devoted servants. Like their brothers, the Madrassis, they seem to be born cooks. Any Uraon boy in a few months can become a decent cook. Colonel Dalton remarks that their adaptability to other ways and customs is something wonderful, and this is very true. It goes so far that their exterior appearance changes entirely; even the colour of their skin, which is naturally very black, becomes tawny when they live for a long time among fair-complexioned people. You see them laugh sometimes at people who come back from the Duars after a long sojourn there, because they look like Lepchas. They have even remarked themselves that Uraons who are generally beardless wear long whiskers and look like Muhammadans when they have lived for a long time among them.

The Uraon boys seem to be for a time very quick in learning and very intelligent. But this impression does not last long. In a short time they master reading, writing and simple arithmetic, but after that they come to a standstill. Their brains seem to have become filled to the brim. Anything added to this, for most of them, is useless and simply overflows. Boys and girls up to a certain age have decent and even agreeable features. But the women after bearing one or two children become shapeless, and the men, specially those addicted to drinking, become real horrors. In height they are not much above the average, but there are some well-built men among them. Many of them are real duffers who cannot even add two and two by counting on their fingers. Others always add with the help of small pebbles or the phalanges of their fingers. In such a state one can fancy how easily they become a prey to the vexation of the local police and the exactions of the zamindars. They are quite helpless, as they cannot explain what has happened. Even when asked plain questions, and in the courts of justice, in cross-examination, they are sure to make a mess of the most simple cases. The best way to mete out justice to them is to condescend to listen to their complaints personally in a kind of paternal and *quasi* official way. They are not altogether ungrateful, and the memory of officials like Dalton, Power and Streatfeild will live among them.

Language.—There is not the least doubt about the origin of their language being Dravidian, though it appears to be entirely different from the parent stock. In their long peregrinations they have adopted a great number of foreign words and expressions. Their pronunciation even has suffered radical changes, most probably on account of their long intercourse with the Muhammadans, just as the pronunciation of Spanish has suffered from the long intercourse of the Spaniards with the Moors. They have a strong predilection for gutturals and aspirates unknown to the Dravidians. This is specially noticeable in the *Kh*, which has two sounds—one deeply guttural, which is identical with the Spanish (*jota*) in *joven*, or the Arabic (ج): this might be represented by the Greek (χ). The other is pronounced like the ordinary *Kh* in Hindi. The conjugations of their verbs also have undergone great modifications. In the past tenses they make use as

auxiliaries of the Hindi verbs *lagna* and *rahna*. Thus :—*as ana lagiyas*, he was saying, and *ankan rahdan*, I have said.

Most of the words they now use have Hindi roots or are the same as those they use in Sadani, or the *lingua franca* of Chota Nagpur. They all know Sadani, even the women ; and their language seems doomed to perish soon. In some parts of the Province they have forgotten it entirely. The Uraons living close to Ranchi speak Sadani and Mundari. The people of Biru speak Sadani more than Uraon, while some of those that live in Sirguja speak only Sadani. There is a great resemblance between the language of the Uraons and that of their brothers the Malé of Rajmahal. Any intelligent reader who knows Uraon can easily understand any book written in Malto.

Explanation of some phenomena.—The earth of course is flat, otherwise how could men walk on the other side with their head downwards without being thrown into space. To keep her in position, they imagine a rather complicated contrivance. She rests on the back of a tortoise which is caught very firmly between the long legs of a crab. When the tortoise gets tired and wants to change her position an earthquake takes place, but the crab is always there attentive to her duty and saves the world from a catastrophe. She catches the tortoise very firmly with her claws and never allows her to move too much.

The sun is alive, otherwise how could he make his rounds every day. The moon also is alive, and has many children, namely the stars. Formerly the sun also had lots of children, but he was induced by the moon to eat them up. Hence the enmity that exists between them. This is how the moon effected her purpose. One day the moon invited the sun to dinner and gave him a good meal of sweet potatoes cooked in butter. These were so good and tasty that the sun asked her what it was, as he wanted to eat the same thing again. The moon shamefacedly confessed that they were her own children. "Well," said the sun, "my children must be as good as yours." So saying he departed and killed them all. When he began to eat he found out that he had been cheated, and came down in a rage to punish the moon. She, however, seeing him coming, hid behind a mango tree, but the sun cut her with a sword, cursing her at the same time, saying : "Now you shall keep that cut all your life. You will try to get cured every month, but as soon as you think you are all right, the cut will reappear and go on increasing." From that time we have the different phases of the moon, and the shadow of the mango tree remains printed on her face. From that time, also, the moon keeps away from the sun and appears only when she knows that he is gone to sleep.

Now let us not suppose for a moment that they look upon these explanations as humbug. These strange stories satisfy their simple minds as much as the most complicated astronomical theories satisfy ours. Tell an Uraon peasant that the moon is perhaps as big as the top of the banian tree that is at the entrance of his village, and some of the stars might be even bigger. Out of respect for you, he will pretend to believe you, but follow him stealthily till he meets one of his own kind and listen to the good and hearty laugh they will have together at your stupidity and the stupidity of all the *sahibs* to believe such stories. They will laugh much more at your theories than we can laugh at theirs. A whirlwind is a *bhut* that has gone mad. A nightmare is a *bhut* trying to smother a man, etc. etc.

Handia.—This is an item which should not be forgotten in notes about the Uraons, as this plays a great rôle in their private life. It is prepared in this way: they put rice in an earthen vessel or *gugri*, pour over it just as much water as is required to cover it and boil it. When it is nearly cooked they take it off the fire and spread it on a mat to dry. A kind of yeast called *ranu* is then mixed up with it, and the whole shut up in an old earthen vessel. The secret of making good *handia* is to have this last pot as well baked as possible, and the old matrons choose always an old one that has been used for a long time in cooking rice. After five or six days the *handia* is ready. They pour water on the rice, let it soak well, and afterwards strain it. A *handia* containing three seers of rice will yield three gallons of very good beer, so that the Uraons can easily get drunk without ruining themselves. It is a great pity that they cannot indulge in the home brew moderately, as it is a very healthy, strengthening and refreshing drink. *Handia* is as intoxicating as ordinary beer, but has not the disastrous effects of *daru* or native gin. A man under the influence of *daru* becomes a perfect wild beast solely intent on mischief; whilst a man intoxicated with *handia* seems to forget all his miseries, becomes talkative, and seems to enjoy life. Look at a group of those wild Uraons sitting before you; they look like a flock of sheep or a herd of buffaloes at rest. Their look is vacant; their heads drooping. Ask them some questions and scarcely one or two will be able to talk reasonably. Bring one *handia* among them and you will see all the eyes fondly following it, and knowing smiles brighten their listless faces. As soon as they have tasted the beer they become different men: they begin to talk and express their opinions freely, and where you could not get any information, you will get more than you wished for. The old *handia*-drinkers, and they are legion, seem always to be half-asleep, and only awake when under the influence of their favourite drink.

The Uraons are very sociable beings, and like to enjoy life together. They are paying visits to one another nearly the whole year round. They call this *pahi*, and it assumes the proportions of a national institution. In these the *handia* always plays a great part. Any man, who would presume to receive visitors without offering them a *handia*, would be hooted and insulted by his guests, who would find a sympathising echo from all the people of the village. One may say that from the time of the new rice at the end of September to the end of the marriage-feast, *viz.*, till March, there is a continual going and coming of *pahis*. For a marriage-feast 40 *handias* are prepared by the groom's father, and all the people of the village that can afford it supply one also. Each *handia* gives about three gallons of rice-beer, so that in one day and a half, in a village of 30 houses, about 200 gallons of rice-beer are despatched. The Uraons are famous for their dances. They delight in spending the whole night, from sunset till morning, in this most exciting amusement, and in the dancing season they go from village to village. They get, as it were, intoxicated with the music, and there is never any slacking of the pace. On the contrary, the evolutions seem to increase till very early in the morning, and it sometimes happens that one of the dancers shoots off suddenly from the gyrating group, and speeds away like a spent top, and, whirlwind-like, disappears through paddy-fields and ditches till he falls entirely exhausted. Of course it is the devil who has taken possession of him. One can well imagine in what state the dancers are at the first crow of the cock, and when

l'Aurore avec ses doigts de rose entr'ouvre les portes de l'Orient," she finds the girls straggling home one by one, dishevelled *trainant l'aile*, too tired even to enjoy the company of the boys, who remain behind in small groups still sounding their tom-toms at intervals as if sorry that the performance was so soon over. And wonderful to say and incredible to witness, they will go straight to the stall, yoke their bullocks, and work the whole morning with the same spirits and cheerfulness as if they had spent the whole night in the most refreshing sleep. At 11 o'clock they come home with their bullocks, eat their meal, and take a nap this time with a vengeance. They are like logs of wood stretched in the verandahs, and the report of a cannon would not disturb their heavy slumbers. It is only at about 2 o'clock that, poked and kicked about unmercifully by the people of the house, they reluctantly get up with heavy eyes and weary limbs to resume their work. How they can stand this for a long time is beyond comprehension, but such a life cannot help playing havoc with the system, and as they live too quickly their life is quickly spent. You find very few old people among the Uraons. At about 40 they have no vitality left in them, and they begin to vegetate.

VI.—VILLAGES AND HOUSES.

In some parts of the country the Uraons live in large villages consisting of 100 and even 200 houses. These are huddled together in the most perfect disorder: there are no thoroughfares, but only small little bits of winding and crooked paths—a most perfect labyrinth leading you to an infinite series of *cul-de-sacs*, each one more puzzling than the last. A European who finds himself in one of these mazes would find it impossible to get out of it without a guide. Nothing more monstrously filthy can be imagined than one of these villages in the rainy season. As it is impossible to dig any ditch in such a disorderly heap of houses, the rain collects and forms stagnant pools. The cattle, the pigs (every Uraon must keep five or six pigs) have very soon made a perfect quagmire through which everyone has to wade knee-deep. Imagine the sink of filth this must be, and what a mixture of nose-offending matter gets accumulated in four months. But the pigs and the children delight in it; and you can see them wallowing together side by side in perfect harmony.

The houses are very small and low, most of them consisting of four mud walls, 15 feet long, seven feet high, and six feet broad, surmounted by a thatched roof. In the middle of one of these walls there is a hole $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, which is the door; it is level with the ground, whilst on both sides there is a raised but hollow verandah under which a whole family of pigs are always fighting and screaming. Inside the corps the *logis* is divided into three parts: on one side the bullocks and the goats separated from the middle room by three bamboos put horizontally, and resting, on one side, in the wall and, on the other side, attached to a pole. Near the pole there is a small door of trellised bamboos. On the other side is the granary, and a place for pots and pans and all kinds of utensils where they lie heaped up together. In the middle is a small room left for the people to sit in and prepare their food. There are generally three *chulas*, or hearths. No Government in the time of any epidemic ever invented a more perfect system of fumigation. The *chulas* are lighted with half-dried wood, the water is boiling, there is no chimney, no hole

except the door, and the smoke and steam soon entirely fill the whole compartment. Natives themselves choke and cough, and bitter tears roll down their cheeks. As for a European, it would be death by suffocation if he had to remain half an hour in it. Added to all this is the stench of goats and the smell of cows and dirty men blending together, and you will have an idea of the ordeal through which the nostrils have to pass. The entrance is closed by two big revolving planks roughly hewn out of the trunk of a tree. They are a most heavy and unwieldy concern, too, to the fingers that are caught between them, when with a screech and a bang they come together. On the upper part you have a similar plank to support the wall above the door. This is called the *kapar-phora*, i.e., the forehead-breaker. Never was a name so well applied. The natives themselves are not in danger of breaking their heads, simply on account of their hardness, but for a European who would deem it polite to go in bare-headed his fate would be sealed. As for the missionary, who has often to go and visit his people in time of sickness, his delapidated *topi* bears witness to the numerous encounters it has had with the famous *kaparphora*.

VII.—MISCELLANEOUS CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS.

Gaon Banowri.—The *gaon banowri*, or settlement of the village, is the ceremony that is resorted to, to put everything right in the village. An epidemic for man and cattle can be brought about

(1) By the *khunta bhuts* of the village who club together and revolt against Pat because they have not been satisfied with the sacrifices offered to them at the three great feasts of Sarhul, Kodleta, and Kanhiari.

(2) By a band of foreign lawless *bhuts* coming like a band of gipsies to steal and plunder.

(3) By the *bhuts* of the neighbouring village.

(4) By *bhuts* brought in by *dain besahis*.

In all these four cases several *ojhas* are called to practice the *ghosna*—" *bhut ko harane ke waste* "—to subdue the *bhuts*. The work is very often very hard, and they have to toil at their winnowing-fans for several days. At last, when the virulence of the sickness has subsided, they declare that they have found out the *bhuts*. In the first case, namely, when the epidemic is caused by the *khunta bhuts* of the village, the Pahan is held responsible, and he has immediately to satisfy his clients. Sacrifices are then offered to Pat, Duharia and other *bhuts*.

In the second case, the foreign *bhuts* are caught, shut up in a *singhi*, as has been explained above, and carried away very far to be thrown into a waterfall.

In the third case, the Pahan of the next village to which the *bhuts* belong is called. His *bhuts* are shut up, not in a *singhi*, but in a leaf of *sakua* with *arwa* rice. Fowls are given to him, and he goes back to his village with his *bhuts*, whom he settles down in their old places by offering them sacrifices.

The fourth case happens when the epidemic lasts very long and the *ojhas* have been unable to subdue the *bhuts* by their *mantras* and incantations; then it is certain that

dain and *dain besahis* are at work ; their *mantras* are so powerful as to enable the *bhuts* to laugh at the *ojhas* "*Inde irae.*" In some cases, when the *ojhas* and the people have not lost their heads, and are not over-excited, they have recourse to the *kansphandi* and the *sokha*, in the manner already described. But when the epidemic has been very virulent and many people or cattle have died, their rage knows no bounds, and they must have victims at once. Full scope is then given to the inventive powers of the *ojhas*, provided they can supernaturally show the culprits. Two examples will suffice to show how they proceed in such a case.

1st.—All the people of the village are called and made to sit in two rows, the *ojhas* sitting in the middle. Clods of earth, each representing a man or woman, are placed at some distance, and a small boy sits near the *ojhas* with his hand resting on a stone. The *ojhas* then begin to mutter their *mantras* and chant their incantations, and stir the rice in their winnowing-fans. After an hour or two the stone begins to move and drags the boy to one of the clods of earth. They then renew the operations till the stone refuses to move. Those that have been designated in that way are then caught bound and beaten in such a way that they very seldom escape with their life.

2nd.—The people are called and made to sit so as to form an immense circle, in the middle of which the *ojhas* sit. A handful of rice is distributed to everyone, and a he-goat is bound close to the *ojhas*. After one or two hours of *mantras* and incantations, the people are told to stretch out their hands with the rice resting on the open palm in front of them. The he-goat is then let loose. He goes sniffing about, and when he finds the *dain besahi* eats of the rice,—those that are designated in this fashion are sometimes buried alive, a custom which still exists in the Native States, though it has entirely disappeared in Lohardaga and Palamau. Cases of beating to death are frequent everywhere.

In connection with cattle diseases, they have a custom which bears some resemblance to the *Rog Khedna*. When they see that their cows and bullocks are getting lean and sickly they have recourse to a means which is well calculated to be very effective. The *goala* or herdsman is called, and the people assemble, armed with sticks. They detach a big wooden bell from the neck of one of the bullocks and tie it to the neck of the *goala*. Then follows a scene never to be forgotten by the herdsmen. All heap insults upon him, and threaten him with their sticks. It is indeed a most ludicrous sight to see the herdsman taking to his heels with his big bell dangling round his neck, followed by a mass of black fiends howling behind him. Arrived at the boundary of the village he lets drop the bell. A sacrifice is offered, and the cattle are bound to get all right.

There remain still some practices which it is difficult to classify. For example, the *pujas* of Chandi and Barpahari and the two feasts of Sohrai and Karam with the two *bhaiaries*. Chandi is the goddess of hunting—she is represented by a stone at the foot of a tree. Chandi is a queer goddess that seems to rejoice in the familiarity of young unmarried boys. There is a day on which the boys have to come and make water near her stone, and she receives her *puja* only from them. Eight days before a hunting expedition the boys assemble near the stone representing Chandi, and one of them is

chosen according to one of the three methods used in choosing the *pahan* or *baiga*. The boy selected has to come every night quite naked, and offer to the goddess *ghi* and incense, and on the day of the expedition he sacrifices five fowls to her.

Sohrai.—This is properly the feast of the cattle, as the people want to show their gratitude to the animals who have worked the whole year for them. But as they have worked together they must also feast together. On the eve of the ceremony a lamp is kept burning the whole night in the stable, and a cock of different colours is offered in every house in honour of Gaureya. When offering the sacrifices they join hands and say this prayer: "O Gaureya, kind Devata, look after our cattle: when they go to graze in the jungle, change the tiger into an ant-hill; change the ravines into a smooth path and snakes into ropes."

The next morning they anoint with oil the heads and horns of all the bullocks, hang garlands of flowers round their necks and put *sindur* on their forehead. The whole day is then spent by the people in rejoicings. No work is taken from the bullocks, and they are given a good feed of corn. In the evening there is a *panchayat* in which the *goala* is rewarded. They settle how much he has to pay for the cattle that have been lost or impounded through his negligence.

Barpahari is a *puja* that has been brought in by the Bhuinhars or the Mundas, who separated from the main stock and have lost their language. Barpahari is nothing else than the well-known Marang Buru, or the great mountain of the Mundas. The man who offers the sacrifices goes to a piece of *tanr*, or highland, accompanied by the *panch* of the villages. There he offers a white cock to Darmesh and two fowls to Barpahari.

The Uraons can never forget their Bhuinhari village, or the place where their forefathers first settled, nor the deities of that place. Every year they have the Phagun Bhaiari and the Hariari Bhaiari. On these two days there is a family *puja*; and all the people of the same family living in the same district assemble at the house of the eldest representative of the family.

The man who has to offer the *puja* is chosen according to one of the two methods for choosing the *baiga*, and he offers a sacrifice of several fowls to Pat and the other tutelary divinities of their Bhuinhari village. A fowl is offered also to Pachbal in the customary way. The blood of the victims is spilt in a winnowing-fan, and this with the knife that has been used for the sacrifice remains hanging in the house, and is kept solely for that purpose. Outsiders may be invited, and are even allowed to eat of the fowls that have been sacrificed, but the head, liver, wings, and the legs are exclusively reserved for the members of the Bhaiari.

Karam.—The Karam is a Hindu feast, but as the Uraons and other aboriginal people have taken to it, it is as well to say a word about it. The Karam tree is a godling of the Hindus. The Uraons celebrate this feast a month earlier than the Hindus. The man chosen to officiate at the ceremony, who represents the *panch*, goes from house to house, and performs the *palkhonsna*. On the eve of the day fixed, the boys and girls have to fast, and in the evening they go together to the nearest jungle, and cutting a branch of the Karam, bring it back, dancing and singing in triumph. They plant it in the middle of the *akhra* or dancing place, and adorn it with flowers and lights like a

Christmas-tree. The whole night is spent in dancing round it, and the next morning it is thrown in the river.

The Nagmatia.—We now come to the last but not the least interesting of these personages who play such a great rôle in the inner life of the aborigines of Chota Nagpur, viz., the *nagmatia*, or snake-conjurer. After all that we have described it might be thought that they had taken all possible precautions to ward off sickness and protect themselves against every evil inherent in human nature. But it is not so. There are evils which evidently do not come from the *bhuts*, and these must be thwarted also. Such are bites of venomous animals—snakes, scorpions, centipedes, etc.; bites of dogs, jackals, wounds, sore eyes, earache, abscess, toothache, etc. The healing of all these is the work of the *nagmatia*.

As there are schools for the *ojhas*, so there are schools also for the education of *nagmatias*, but they are not nearly so numerous. The work of the *nagmatia* is still more complicated than that of the *ojha*, and he has to learn many more *mantras* and incantations. When a certain number of boys in a village have made up their mind to learn the art, they set to work and build a house or school-room close to the house of the *guru*. There they assemble every evening for several hours, and their education will last for one or two years, according to their progress in learning.

On the first day they have the ceremony called *Sirnicharana*. The *guru* prepares a mixture of milk, *til*, *gur*, and *arwa* rice, and gives each pupil a handful to eat raw. On that day they have to fast. Every day before beginning to learn they have an invocation to the chief *gurus* and Deotas of the craft. The invocation is sung in chorus, and each of the eight leading *gurus* or Deotas is invited one after the other to come and sit among them. Kanru is invited to sit on a *nag patia*, i.e., a basket in which snake-charmers keep their cobras. So also is *newra*, or the mongoose, deified. The others are invited to sit on a golden stool; their different places are marked out in the school-room, so that whilst they are singing the pupils can follow in mind each Deota, stepping in and going across the room to take his seat.

Here is the song; it will be seen how graphic it is, and how likely to impress their mind.

“Kawna guru mora awat hobain
Duwaria, duara duara chhori na de.”

(Who is my *guru* that may be coming: *duwaria* (porter), do not let the door shut). The invocation is supposed to take place just when the last pupil has stepped into the school-room, and the porter has still one hand on the door to keep it open. These doors are heavy planks, which of their own weight swing to with a bang. Hence the necessity of someone holding it whilst the pupils are going in. This is repeated twice or thrice.

“Kanru guru mora awat hobain
Duwaria, duara duara chhori na de.”

(It may be my *kanru guru* who is coming—porter do not let the door shut.)

“Guruji baba ji ai gelain pahun .
More Kanru guru de rakho
Baise ke nag phenik pitia.”

(My respected *guru*, my respected father has come for a visit; give to my *guru* a cobra basket to sit upon.)

Exactly the same song is sung for *newra* and also for the six others, the name of the *guru* alone being changed.

“Guru ji baba ji ai gelain pahun
More Madho guru de rakho
Baise ke sone ke machlawā?”

(My respected *guru*, my respected father has come for a visit; give to my Madho *guru* a gold stool to sit upon.)

The eight great *gurus* or Deotas are Kanru, Newra, Madho, Deogan, Hanuman, Narsingh, Bhainsasur, and Bhuinphar. These are the Deotas who produce trances. The classes always begin on a Sunday. After learning for six days, *i.e.*, on the next Sunday, they have the ceremony called *Painsaru*. They go to the jungle with their *guru*, and everyone cuts a handful of *sabai* grass growing on an ant-hill (no other will do). This is to make a whip, which everyone keeps with him as long as his education lasts. The incantations being very monotonous and lessons continuing till very late in the night, the pupils are very often tempted to sleep. But when anyone is seen to be nodding, all the others strike him with their whips. When everyone has collected *sabai* enough, they return to the school-room, with mud taken from an ant-hill, and in the middle of the room build an erection resembling the stone used by the natives for grinding wheat. A piece of iron curved to the shape of a cobra and a trident with the middle prong protruding are stuck in the middle. This acts as an altar, and every day everyone has to bring fresh flowers to decorate it. On the day of the *Painsaru* a sacrifice of two fowls is offered to the chief deified *guru*, and the blood of the offering spilt is on the altar. Near it on the floor they burn a mixture of frankincense, *ghi*, and *gur* which is called *gandhup*. The whole day the strictest fast is observed, and the morning is devoted to going about the jungle with the *guru* and learning the medicines they have to use. Every Sunday the same routine is followed. In the evening every pupil has to come and bend for some time before the altar and inhale the fumes of *gandhup*. Then begins a scene which is also repeated every Sunday. All begin their incantations and *mantras*, singing moving their heads and clapping their hands in tune with the music. Their invocations are to the eight deities that produce trances to come and take possession of them. After some time, when one of them begins to show signs of possession, they all sing together the following song:—

“Bharua to bharua bhorī gaio
Isar Mahadeo na pawe
Kunia chata pari gail.”

(Possession, possession, be so complete that the god Mahadeo cannot increase it—that the waters of the well be exhausted.) The music is so soft, so sweet, so insinuating with such a perfect gradation of feeling, that at the last word the singer seems to softly swoon away into the land of oblivion.

There are five different kinds of possession according to the different Deotas that

cover their disciples with their shades. The man possessed by Bhainsasur leaves the room immediately and goes treading heavily along to the next quagmire where he remains wallowing in the mud like a buffalo. After an hour he comes back besmeared with mud from head to foot, and Bhainsasur through the mouth of the possessed pupil tells the *guru* that he wants to go away. He is led to the place where the *gandhup* is burning, inhales the fumes, and comes back to his senses.

The man possessed by Hanuman, or the monkey deified, begins immediately to run along the rafters of the school-room, imitating the monkey in everything—his cries, his gestures, his grimaces. Those that have not as yet been possessed enjoy the joke and ask the *guru* to call Narsing, or the tiger deified, to take possession of another disciple. Then there follows a scene as ludicrous perhaps as can be imagined. The man possessed by Narsing runs about the house on all fours roaring like a tiger and trying to jump on the walls to catch the monkey. No pantomime could be played more perfectly, as each unconsciously shows all the characteristics of a tiger and a monkey in a stage of nature. The agility of the man possessed by Hanuman is something most wonderful. He runs from rafter to rafter, jumps on the wall, then again on the rafters showing the same fear and producing the same noise, as a terrified monkey, till at last, seeing the door open, he jumps on the floor and runs out to the nearest tree followed by the tiger. Here they remain for some time, the tiger running round and round the tree and the monkey going from branch to branch. After some time they come back, and Hanuman and Narsing, through the mouth of the possessed pupils, ask the *guru* to be allowed to depart. He leads them to the *gandhup*, and makes them inhale the fumes, and they come back to their senses. The man possessed by *Newra* goes sniffing about the house and searching here and there like the mongoose. The possession produced by *Deogan Konru*, *Madho* and *Bhuinphar* are similar. They dance and dance, in the queerest fashion, until they are relieved by the *guru*. These scenes are repeated every Sunday: sometimes two, sometimes three pupils fall into a trance, whilst the others enjoy the joke. On special days only, they all become possessed at the same time, and the scene that follows can be better imagined than described. All the time the *guru* keeps on singing *mantras* and incantations.

There is no monotony in the scenes that take place. The *guru* can vary them as he pleases with the mongoose and the monkey, or the buffalo and the tiger, and so on. So that Sunday is always a great day of recreation for the pupils. Hanuman, of course, is their favourite. He has been known to go into a garden, and finding no other fruit but capsicum to eat a whole handful of it. But this he cannot keep in his stomach, and as soon as he comes back to his senses he vomits it out.

They say that sometimes *bhuinphar* takes a fancy to one of the pupils and then something wonderful happens: he seems to learn all the *mantras* and incantations by intuition or revelation. A pupil so specialised seems to be always in a state of hypnotism, and sings continually *mantras* and incantations. It is recognised that *bhuinphar* has taken possession of him for good, and he leaves the school and becomes a *bhagat*. He lives like a *jogi* separated from the tribe, does not drink any intoxicating liquor and eats no meat. He grows a thick tuft of hair on the top of his head, which he

besmears every day with cow-dung. After some years this acquires tremendous proportions, takes a yellowish hue, and, as he has to tie it, he seems to be walking with a small bundle of hay on his head. Such a man becomes a *sokha*—a kind of clairvoyant of the tribe. It is impossible to treat *ex professo* of the *sokha*. Like all the mysterious personages of his kind he is a very reticent man, and what is going on between him and *bhuinphar* must remain a secret.

Enough of this digression. Every Saturday, after eating their evening meal, the pupils spend the whole night in learning *mantras* and practising the *jharna*. The next morning they go to the jungle, where the *guru* shows them all the medicinal plants they have to use, and explains their properties. As they have to fast, they do not go home, and the whole day is spent with the *guru*. The amount they have to learn is really incredible. They have to learn by heart more than two hundred *mantras* and incantations, some of which are very long and often without any meaning. They must know the name of all the *gurus* and *deotas*; and these are very numerous. The names of all the snakes ought to be very familiar to them, and they ought to know what kind of medicine is to be used in every case. They learn all the tricks that are generally shown by snake-charmers. They can make a cobra stand, raise its head, display its hood, and crawl just as they like. They can make a snake come out of its hole by singing incantations only: this takes a pretty long time, but with the *nagdan*, or the instrument used by snake-charmers, they can make any snake come out quickly and follow them.

As the chief work of the *ojha* is the *ghosna*, so the work of the *nagmotia* is the *jharna*, or the sweeping away of the disease or poison. The insignia of the *ojha* are a winnowing-fan and a lamp, and the insignia of the *nagmotia* are a blade of long grass (*kher*) one foot long and a *nagdan*. In the *jharna* the *nagmotia* keeps the blade of grass in his hand, and, whilst he is chanting his incantations and muttering his *mantras*, he passes it over the seat of the sickness and moves it, just as if it were a fan, with a downward motion, giving a small jerk at the end, taking care not to touch the body. By this means he brings down by degrees the disease or the poison, from the place originally infected, to the toes or fingers, and from there make it pass into the ground as if it were an electric current. Sometimes also he makes it pass into the blade of grass and blows it into the air. They ascribe to the *jharna* the most powerful power, and the blade of grass, like a magnet wand, seems to develop such magnetic power that it can draw anything away. At the end of a year they have to pass their examination and have to prepare themselves for it by a fast for two days. Every pupil's *gun*, or magnetic power, is duly tested and literally weighed in the balance. But this is so extraordinary a performance, that it is impossible to believe it, and the thing must be ascribed to a trick of the *guru* to inspire his pupils with the most unlimited confidence and faith in their art. A balance is brought in, and as many stones weighing exactly one seer (such as are used in the bazar) as there are pupils. All are properly weighed and tested. Each pupil then takes a stone and has to practice the *jharna* on it for three hours. They all, of course, try their best and sweat over their task. At a signal given by the *guru* all stop, and the stones are weighed again and the deficiency in weight made up with pice. They say

that a man has attained the apogee of his art when, after a three hours' *jharna*, he has caused his stone to lose ten pice in weight. These things at first sight appear to us impossible, but we are forced to believe them when, after taking all our precautions not to be cheated or influenced by hypnotism, we see them with our own eyes. To them, however, faith is not so difficult. All that is necessary is to find the proper *mantra*. Give a *nagmotia* the proper *mantra*, and he will set to work at once and begin his *jharna* to bring down the sun, the moon and the stars. Like the old Romans he would say :—

“*Carmina vel coelo possunt deducere lunam guru.*”

After passing their examination to the satisfaction of the *guru* they get their diploma. The examination takes place always on a Sunday. They all go together to the nearest river, and the *guru* chooses a shallow place where the water is just trickling over the land. There he makes as many furrows as there are successful candidates. Then they stand in two rows, every one over a furrow with the *guru* in the middle. Whilst the pupils are singing together a song, in which they extol their power over that of the *guru*, the latter sprinkles each one with water taken, successively, from the furrow in which he stands, his position being determined according to the order of merit. After this they return to the school, where a he-goat is sacrificed to the chief *gurus* and *devotas*. The *guru* then calls his wife; and these two sit face to face on the floor with their legs stretched on the ground. Each pupil in turn, in the order of passing the examination, comes and sits on the lap of the *guru*, who dips his finger in the blood of the offering and makes with it a big line on the forehead of the pupil. From the lap of the *guru* he passes to the lap of the *guruwain* who does the same. From this time they can practice their art. It is a great feast in the village when the pupils receive their diplomas, and it is the *guru* who takes them home one by one.

When a man has been bitten by a snake the *nagmotia* is called, and the first thing done is to ascertain what kind of snake has caused the injury. To do this he has two means. If the snake is close to the house, or if the people have seen him going into a hole, he gets him out by singing his incantations or blowing his *nagdan*. When the man has been bitten in the fields, or far from his house, the *nagmotia* discovers him through the blade of grass while proceeding with the *jharna*. As the *ojha* calls all the *bhuts* by their names so the *nagmotia* calls all the snakes by their names, and when he pronounces the right name, he says that he feels something like an electric shock in his hand. Then he applies the particular medicine to the wound and gives his patient some roots to chew. In some cases he fills his mouth with three different kinds of medicinal herbs, applies his lips to the wound and sucks up the blood which he spits out. But this is rare; for, whether due to the effect of the medicine he keeps in his mouth or to the effect of the poison, the result is that he loses his teeth.

After these preliminaries the real *jharna* is begun—an invocation to all the *gurus* and *devotas* of the craft—and then follow his *mantras* and incantations. After some time he asks the man how far the poison has gone up. If the man has been bitten in the foot or leg, and the poison has reached the trunk, he brings it down to the thigh where he makes a ligature; from the thigh he brings it to the knee, to the ankle and the big toe, each

time making a new ligature, till finally he makes it pass from the toe into the ground. But this is not an easy task, and the *nagmotia* has sometimes to work the whole night. Even in that case his repertoire of incantation is never exhausted. Is it the effect of the medicines alone or the effect of the medicines and mesmerism combined? The fact is that they often succeed in saving the man's life. When they do not succeed they never confess the powerlessness of their art, but say it is beyond their power as the bite has been caused by a *bhut*!

It would be tedious to relate how they proceed in all the sicknesses that are within their sphere. Four of their beliefs, however, are rather interesting.

When a man has sore eyes, the belief is that it is due to ashes and smoke in their eyes. The story runs thus:—

Mahadeo and Parbati were one day burning the jungle to prepare a spot for cultivation. A strong wind arose and drove some smoke and ashes into Mahadeo's eyes. Taking them out he cursed them and sent them into the world. They are still flying about and are the direct cause of all sore eyes. The *nagmotia* comes in the evening, takes the man alone outside and tells him to look at a star. Whilst the man is looking at the stars, he takes some ashes, which he has brought hidden in his belt, between his fingers and passes them before the eyes of the man, all the time singing *mantras*. When this is over he tells the man to watch and then blows away the ashes from his fingers. He does this three times with three different *mantras* and the man thinks that he is cured. For the bite of a dog, a jackal or a boar, they believe that the pain is caused by some hair of the animal that sticks in the wound. In this case the *nagmotia* calls two unmarried boys or girls, who are given some millet flour and water, and, whilst the *nagmotia* proceeds with the *jharna*, they each roll the flour mixed with water into a ball. When the *jharna* is over the *nagmotia* takes the two balls between his fingers, opens them, and to the great astonishment and joy of the sick man, discovers to him what was the cause of his sufferings. This is a trick; and the hair is only something like the filaments we find when, in the rainy season, we break slowly mildewed damp bread.

The method of performing *jharna* for the mumps and toothache is much the same; it is also a trick. The *nagmotia* hides a small worm in ashes wrapped in a leaf of *sakhua*. Whilst he sings his *mantras*, he catches the head of the suffering man between his hands, keeping the leaf of *sakhua* with the worm applied to one of the ears, whilst he pours oil in the other. When he has finished his *mantras*, he opens the leaf of *sakhua* and shows the worm that was causing the man such excruciating pains.

These, however, are the only cases in which they consciously deceive the people. They always apply medicine first, and their tricks are performed solely to give the sick man confidence. Then there is their curious belief about palsy (*langhan*). The word *langhan* means to cross, to pass from one place to another; therefore *langhan* is the sickness the nature of which is, when dislodged from one body, to pass into another. This is again a good illustration of their way of thinking, as the whole practice rests entirely on a *jeu de mot*. There are only certain months in which the *langhan* can be cured; and it must be always at the new moon. When the *nagmotia* is called he collects first the things that *langhan* likes best: a collar of beads, a piece of bamboo, a broken

piece of gourd, a blade of grass and a pice. He makes a small bundle of these which he ties with a long piece of cotton thread. Another man is called to hold these in his hands, but lest the sickness should pass into his arm, his wrists are bound, not only with a rope but with *mantras*. Whilst the *jharna* is going on the man, holding the bundle in both his hands, sits in front of the patient. Then after long *mantras* and incantations the *langhan* is at last induced to pass into the bundle and with the greatest precautions carried away from the house. They choose a small path which is not much frequented, place a peg on one side and the bundle on the other, and tie both together with a small string crossing the path. Anyone touching the string with his foot is bound to get the *langhan*.

Whitlow.—They think the disease is brought on by the bite of either a lizard, a fish called *gorai*, a praying mantis or a grasshopper. To cure this the *nagmotia* puts on the ground four clods of earth representing these four animals or insects. The patient is made to sit in front of these, at a distance of two feet, with his hand flat on the ground and his fingers stretched out. A stone is put on the hand and the *jharna* begins. After the necessary *mantras* and incantations the sick-finger is irresistibly drawn to one of the clods of the earth. They say that the disease, before going away, wants the sacrifice of the animal represented by that clod of earth. Very few *nagmotias* have magnetic power enough to bring this about.

Judu lagana.—As has been said before, it is firmly believed that an *ojha* with his *mantras* can make a *bhut* sit, as they put it, wherever he likes, and a *bhut* sticks like a leech to the blood that has been offered to him in sacrifice. When, therefore, anyone bears a grudge against someone else, and wants to take his revenge, recourse is had to the *ojha* who is asked to make a *bhut* sit (*baithana*) either on one of those small things which the women stick on their forehead, and which look like wafers, or on a pice or on a *singhi*. The man to whose possession that pice passes is sure to be possessed by the *bhut* that has been made to sit on it.

The wafer is used when there is a crowd, as on a bazar day. The victim is spotted among the crowd, and, in passing, the wafer is attached to his clothes. This is a very dangerous trick, as the victim, on seeing the wafer sticking to his clothes, thinks that he is done for, and gets in such a fright that he at once becomes ill. The *singhi* is used to put in new houses either inside the mud walls or below the floor. This practice is so common that the people, when building a new house, watch it day and night until it is completed to prevent their enemies from sticking a *singhi* in the walls. This they dread above every thing, as they believe that a *singhi* in a house is a continual source of misfortunes. There is, of course, a remedy. When, after a series of misfortunes, for which they cannot account, the *ojha* declares that there is a *singhi* buried in the house, and the ceremony called *singhi nikalna* is performed. They call in the chief *ojhas* of the place who practise the *ghosna* for several days and then pretend to find the *singhi*. But this is only a fraud. The *ojhas* first bury the *singhi* and then pretend it is by their *mantras* they have found it. The *ojha* who finds it is given either a bullock or a cow.

The Uraons, like all other aborigines, are very superstitious. It would be tedious to record here all their superstitions, but a few examples may be given :

A woman never pronounces the name of her husband. This is good to know, as the time wasted in pressing for an answer will be saved. If she pronounces his name, the cotton crop is sure to fail.

Along the road you meet very often with heaps of stones. It is generally believed that these mark the place where a man has been caught by a tiger. It is not so. Those heaps are called *pathal punji*. When people go to the bazar, they add a stone to the heap in the hope they will then make good bargains. When they go for a visit, they do the same in the hope of getting plenty of rice-beer to drink.

Bihi khedna (to drive away the portent).—Generally once a year, sometimes twice, the whole country is startled by some wonderful news and some portent from heaven. It is difficult to know how these rumours originate, but they spread like wildfire. The two last ones were these. In Palamau a man had sown pumpkins in his garden. Among them was a very big one, and, when he opened it, there sallied forth two children. One of them stood with an inkstand in one hand and a pen in the other hand and said, "Aye! aye! fly from home for three days and do not look at your children." Having said this he fell down dead. In a few days the whole country was in a great state of commotion. As soon as this warning was imparted to them from heaven, people began running in all directions to avoid the sight of their children. Lots of people actually built small huts with branches and lived in the jungle to escape the wrath to come. In this the Hindus and Mahomedans joined.

One of these scares is almost annual in its recurrence. Suddenly the news spreads that a woman has given birth to a young pig. The rumour at least has the good effect of ridding the country of many of those animals, for, as soon as the news reaches the women, they raise a cry as if the village was on fire, and the whole female population immediately turn out armed with sticks, and, running to the nearest village, make a hecatomb of all the pigs they meet. No one dare make any objection. Of course, the women of the village so visited take the hint and, in their turn, go to the village nearest theirs and so on, so that the country is resonant with squeaking and screeching. The more incredible and the more unlikely the scare is, the more readily will it be believed. Any man endowed with a strong imagination, and having a command of the language, and of graphic and figurative speech, could bring those people to believe anything and do anything provided it be sufficiently stupid. Have we not had an example of it in Birsa Bhagwan? There was nothing remarkable in him, but a strong imagination, some cunning and a perfect command of the language, which enabled him to put things vividly and graphically so as to strike in an irresistible manner on the imagination of his countrymen. Is not this a plausible explanation of this phenomenon? Their intellect is naturally very weak, and nothing, absolutely nothing, is done by them to develop it. To add two and two they have to make use of small stones or count on their fingers. Their imagination, on the contrary, which is naturally vivid, is extraordinarily developed by the most wonderful stories, most wonderfully and vividly related by the *ojhas*, and all those that dabble in sorcery, so that the *folie du logis* gets complete mastery of the mass.

